METAPHYSICAL MYSTERY

METAPHYSICAL MYSTERY

D. R. Khashaba

2021

The Author

Khashaba, D. R., Egyptian independent philosopher, b.1927, philosophized in his teens and twenties but then passed through three dire decades *sans* reading, *sans* thinking, *sans* life. When in his sixties the Fates relented, he read feverishly, racing time to finish his first book, *Let Us Philosophize*, which he self-published in 1998 when he was already past seventy. He expected that would be his last book, but since then he continued to publish book after book and collection after collection. He contributed numerous philosophical papers to *Philosophy Pathways* over the past two decades and published papers in *The Examined Life Online Journal* that ran for a couple of years at the beginning of the past decade (not the more recent journal under the same name) and in *Butterflies and Wheels*. The National Center for Translation, Cairo, published Arabic translations of Khashaba's first four books, which were well received in Egypt. Outside Egypt

Khashaba's work received little attention, except from a handful of enthusiastic readers. Now well into his ninety-fourth year, Khashaba expects to die before that situation is changed; however he thinks it not unreasonable to dream that in some near or distant future it will be acknowledged that he offered the first original development of Platonism since Plotinus, and the first radical critique of philosophical thinking since Kant.

Blog: https://philosophia937.wordpress.com

WORKS BY D. R. Khashaba

All can be freely downloaded from own page on Archive.org:
https://archive.org/details/@daoudkhashaba

***Let Us Philosophize* (1998, 2008)**
***Plato: An Interpretation* (2005)**
***Socrates' Prison Journal* (2006)**
***Hypatia's Lover* (2006)**
***The Sphinx and the Phoenix* (2009)**
***Plato's Memoirs* (2010)**
***Quest of Reality* (2013)**
***Metaphysical Reality* (2o14)**
***Plato's Universe of Discourse* (2015)**
***Creative Eternity: A Metaphysical Myth* (2016)**
***Last Words: philosophical papers* (2017)**
"Stephen Hawking's Bad Metaphysics"
"Eternity and Freedom"
Philosophy of Creative Eternity
(*Creative Eternity* and "Eternity and Freedom" jointly)
***In Praise of Philosophical Ignorance* (2018)**
***2998 a philosophical romance* (2018)**
Goodbye to Philosophy (2018)

***Spaces in Spaceless Thought* (2019)**

***The World Within* (2020)**

***Metaphysics of Mystic Experience* (2020)**

Ashes and Sparks (2020)

***The Cloud of Knowing* (2021)**

THE SUM OF ALL PHILOSOPHY

in a few lines extracted from

Book VI of Plato's *Republic*

"Will it not be a fair plea in his defence to say that it was the nature of the real lover of knowledge to strive emulously for true being and that he would not linger over the many particulars that are opined to be real, but would hold on his way, and the edge of his passion would not be blunted nor would his desire fail till he came into touch with the nature of each thing in itself by that part of his soul to which it belongs to lay hold on that kind of reality— the part akin to it namely and through that approaching it, and consorting with reality really, he would beget intelligence and truth, attain to knowledge and truly live and grow, and so find surcease from his travail of soul, but not before?" (490a-b, tr. Shorey).

"This reality, then, that gives their truth to the objects of knowledge and the power of knowing to the knower, you must say is the idea of good, and you must conceive it as

being the cause of knowledge, and of truth in so far as known. Yet fair as they both are, knowledge and truth, in supposing it to be something fairer still than these you will think rightly of it. But as for knowledge and truth, even as in our illustration it is right to deem light and vision sun-like, but never to think that they are the sun, so here it is right to consider these two their counterparts, as being like the good or boniform, but to think that either of them is the good is not right. Still higher honour belongs to the possession and habit of the good." (508e tr. Shorey)

" ... there is another section in which it (the soul) advances from its assumption to a beginning or principle that transcends assumption,and in which it makes no use of the images employed by the other section, relying on ideas only and progressing systematically through ideas." (510b-c, tr. Shorey)

PREFACE

The following pages sum up the philosophy of a lifetime.

Though I have constantly and emphatically maintained that system is the death of philosophy, yet in this collection, I believe, my philosophy is rounded off in something very much like a system, with one crucial difference: I claim neither objective validity nor formal finality for my philosophical vision. The completeness of my philosophy is the completeness of a fairy tale.

I audaciously claim that the philosophy I present is the most original contribution to philosophical thinking since

Kant. I further claim that it shows the way out of the mire into which philosophy has fallen and renders it once more relevant to human life and the values of human life.

If these claims sound too good to be true, are they not by the same token too good to be thrown away without examination?

D. R. Khashaba

March 24, 2021

CONTENTS

PART ONE: PHILOSOPHICAL PAPERS

Plato's Theology

Giordano Bruno

Bradley Revisited I

Bradley Revisited II

Bradley Revisited I

Bradley Revisited II

Bradley Revisited III

Bradley Revisited IV

Bradley Revisited V

Unity of Humam Culture

The Bounds of Reason

Riddle of Plato

Reasoning in Ethics

Note on Schopenhauer

What Do We Know?

What Must We Do?

What Can We Hope For?

Readings in Spinoza

Apology

Goodbye to Philosophy

Metaphysics of Freedom

The Good

The Human Tragedy

A Creation Myth

Metaphysics of Wisdom

Where is the Soul?

Was Plato Inconsistent?

The Bad Heritage of Descartes

PART TWO

GOSPEL OF CREATIVE ETERNITY

PART ONE

PHILOSOPHICAL PAPERS

PLATO'S THEOLOGY

Preface:

I come to this paper with confused feelings. I have been reading Plato's *Laws* and Book X in particular makes me suspect that I may have grossly erred in my overall assessment of Plato. Not that I in any way have second thoughts about the philosophy that I have been advancing as an original version of Platonism. That remains the philosophy that I have developed in a lifetime of philosophizing and the debt I owe to Plato for the inspiration I found in his works is beyond question. But it seems that what Plato said of poets being deprived by the gods of their wits when they compose their best poems is true of Plato at his best, when he was inspired in a state of *theia mania*, divine madness, so that he himself did not comprehend the true or full import of his oracular deliverances. In other words,

Plato to the very end failed to integrate or harmonize the diverse aspects and workings of his bountiful genius.

*****

(All quotations from the *Laws* are as translated by Trevor J. Sanders in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper.)

*****

In Book X of the *Laws* Plato purports to present a proof of the existence of god or gods. (This is a point I will revert to later on.) In an argument extending over seven pages (893b-899d) he begims by speaking at great length of motion and the kinds of motion to reach a point where we read:

> **"Suppose someone asks 'Sir, do all things stand still, and does nothing move? Or is precisely the opposite true? Or do some things move, while others are motionless?' My reply will be 'I suppose some move and others remain at rest.'"**

We are told that "there must be some *space* in which the stationary objects remain at rest, and those in motion move" and this is followed by a long discussion of kinds of motion and of varying speeds and things colliding and coalescing and disintegrating, giving "rise to all sorts of wonderful phenomena".

All of this could have come from Empedocles or Anaxagoras or Lucretius or in any investigation *peri phuseôs*. Apparently Plato wrote all of this in complete forgetfulness of what 'Socrates' had said in the *Phaedo* where he emphatically insisted that such investigations into things have no relevance to strictly philosophical questions. Hence Socrates renounced investigation into nature because it could never yield answers to questions about ultimate origin or meaning or value.

In all of this Plato was steering towards the conclusion that " the motion that moves both itself and other things" is "the source of change and motion in all things that exist" and that it is "first, in ancestry as well as in power". All of this is much ado about nothing, for to my mind the 'ancestry' of motion needs no proof: motion is a datum of experience and it is obvious that it could not have an extraneous cause, for that cause would then call for a cause for its own being. Plato repeatedly speaks of "self-generated motion" which is, like Spinoza's *sui generis*, a self-contradictory phrase implying that the motion is one thing and what generates the motion is another thing, which is the contradiction that confounds the notion of a transcendent creator.

The whole argument concerns motion but at one point Plato surreptitiously smuggles in the soul, saying "What we really had in view was soul, wasn't it?" Suppose we will let him have it his way, it still avails him nothing. For then

the soul would be merely the principle of motion or at most, as in the vaunted 'final argument for immortality' in the *Phaedo*, the principle of life, under which all living things from a gnat to Socrates are equal without distinction.

But Plato, having ascribed to ancestral motion power and superiority, and having replaced motion with soul, goes on to add perception and intelligence and all virtue which belong to the conventional notion of soul but not to motion.

I would not hesitate a moment in accepting the notion of the world soul as wise and good. But that is a notion that cannot be obtained from any investigation of nature or from any operation of pure reason. That must be confessed to be an imaginative vision, a vision that gives meaning and value to human life but cannot be asserted to be true of the actual world or to be apodictically demonstrable by pure reason. In the *Republic* the pinnacle of Plato's metaphysical insight is reached in the Idea of the Good which is neither arrived at by reasoning nor capable of proof by reason.

Plato needlessly goes on articulating and amplifying his argument without adding anything truly new. He says that since soul has been shown to be older than matter it follows that the spiritual order is older than the material. To my mind this does not make sense. We cannot take 'older than' here in a literal sense. The spiritual order and the material order, the world soul and the actual world,

wisdom amd a wisely lived life, these cannot be separated, these all come under Spinoza's *natura naturans* and *natura naturata* which are two inseparable dimensions of the one Substance; these are all covered by Schopenhauer's principle: no object without subject, no subject without object.

Be it noted that I am not here concerned in the first place to criticize Plato's argument; my prime concern is to affirm that all that Plato says in this respect lies outside the sphere of philosophy proper and that Plato is here going against his insightful insistence (following Socrates) on the radical separation of philosophical thinking and scientific investigation.

Plato having made the soul or numerous souls into a god or numerous gods we get to a calamitous turn in the argument. We read:

> **"And the next unavoidable admission, seeing that we are going to posit soul as the cause of *all* things, will be that it is the cause of good and evil, beauty and ugliness, justice and injustice and all the opposites."**

Plato had stated in more than one of his writings that God cannot be the cause of evil but only of good. Here he gets to the logical consequence of the above statement:

> **"One soul, or more than one? ... more than one. At any rate, we must not assume fewer than two: that which does good, and that which has the opposite capacity."**

Further on Plato says that "it is the best kind of soul that cares

for the entire universe and directs it along the best path." What ground do we have for this assertion? Would that be the conclusion reached by an observer from another universe surveying the world we live in? But I do not want to digress into the problem of good and evil here.

Yet this takes me to another point or rather two points that I had in mind to address in this paper.

Throughout the *Laws* (ad also in parts of the *Republic*) Plato shows great deference and attaches much importance to the customs, norms, rituals, and beliefs of the common religion of the Hellenes. It could be said that this comes in the context of drawing a constitution and proposing laws for a projected Hellenic colony: it would not have been practical to defy or ignore the traditional customs and beliefs of the people. But then I see that it is not only in matters of ritual and beliefs that Plato is unable to free himself from the shackles of current norms, practices, and values. In the laws he proposes not only is slavery admitted without question, but the individual slaves count no more than chattel. His treatment of women is ambivalent: although he makes women equal to men in education and work opportunities, yet in many ways women are considered inferior to men. Again, persons captured in war, if Hellenes, must not be enslaved, but if non-Hellenes, are to be enslaved. That should teach all of us to be humble: for it is very hard, and in many areas impossible, for us to be aware of the beliefs and prejudices that we unconsciously absorb from our surroundings both during our formative

years and also in later stages of our life. That is why we need constantly to philosophize, regularly subjecting our beliefs, aims, and values to scrutiny by reason.
D. R. Khashaba
January 9, 2021

GIORDANO BRUNO

I have been reading Giordano Bruno's *Cause, Principle, and Unity* (translated with a rich, comprehensive Introduction by Robert de Lucca). Though years ago I had contributed a short paper to the Giordano Bruno site, I confess that till now what I knew of Bruno was superficial and second-hand.

Bruno's overall vision is well summed up in his own words as follows:

> **"There is one simple Divinity found in all things, one fecund Nature, preserving mother of the universe insofar as she diversely communicates herself, casts her light into diverse subjects, and assumes various names."**

The most valuable element in Bruno's philosophy is the notion of the World Soul which Bruno apparently derived from Plato's *Timaeus*. "I say that the uni-

versal physical efficient cause is the universal intellect, which is the first and principal faculty of the world soul" ("Second Dialogue").

That was a mystic vision, but instead of intimating his vision, as other mystics do, in images, and symbols borrowed from their Particular cultures or traditions, Bruno "sought to re-unify terrestrial physics with celestial physics" in in a vision of an infinite universe "on the basis of a principle of universal becoming" (De Lucca, Introduction).

> **Like all attempts to fuse physics with metaphysics, this audacious project carried, in my view, its ruin in its very basics. At this point let ne remark that the fine distinctions Bruno draws between the vrious terms of his system such as efficient cause, principle, intellect, etc., could not be anything but conceptual fictions (like all conceptual distinctions) to which we erroneously ascribe fixity and finality. That is why Plato in the *Sophist*, corrects his earlier over-emphasis on the permanence and constancy of Forms and in the closing words of the *Parmenides* says: "Let us then say ... that, as it seems, whether one is or is not, it and the others**

both are and are not, and both appear and do not appear all things in all ways, both in relation to themselves and in relation to each other" (166c, tr. Ary ouise Gill and Paul Ryan).

*****

As far as I can see, becoming does not figure prominently in Bruno's system, but towards the end of the 'Fifth Dialogue' we read:

"Who does not see that corruption and generation derive from the same principle? Is not the end of the corrupt thing the beginning of the thing generated?"

Here we have the universal flux, the ceaseless becoming of all out of all, the perpetual metamorphosis of form into new form. This is what, in my philosophy, is signified by the Principle of Transience: all existence is transient, all that comes to be, in coming to be is vanishing.

Though the notion of the soul is central in Bruno's system yet the World Soul is depicted, as far as I can see, as inhering within the universe. I cannot find this satisfactory. Thus in my philosophy I insist that the highest metaphysical principle, ultimate Reality, cannot be conceived as an actual existent something, cannot even be called an enti-

ty, but is the metaphysical Wholeness of the All: it is the principle and condition of all objectivity but is itself above and beyond objectivity; like Plato's Form of the Good, it brings forth being, life, understanding, but itself is above and beyond being, life, understanding. Likewise, the human soul is not anywhere in the human being but is the metaphysical integrity of the human being, the metaphysical person, the personality of the person.

*****

The notion of infinity, which is central and basic in Bruno's system, I simply find absurd. Pardon mathematicians! Mathematicians make good use of a conceptual fiction of infinity as a working tool, just as zero, point, line are useful tools but can never be actualities in the natural world. I maintain that an actual infinity is an absurdity for all actuality must be determinate and finite. If in creating the number series the human mind were content, with every addition of one, to give the new formation a distinct name as it did for the first ten formations, the number series would have been infinite (as theoretically it is) but utterly unusable. By subjecting the series to finitude at some point, the series became cyclical and good for practical use in all spheres from the marketplace to astrophysics. Com-

monly we take ten as our basic finite grouping, but this is arbitrary and the lmit could be set at any point greater than ten or less than ten. We actually have such secondary finite groupings such as the gross and the dozen, the decade and the century, and how could we forget the cycle of two at the base of all of our digital technology?

*****

As opposed to the futility of Bruno's notion of infinity we have his insightful notion of matter which covers all actuality, all objective existence. This corresponds to Plato's more imaginative and therefore more metaphysically rich notion of the *hupodochê*, the womb of all becoming, in the *Timaeus*.

*****

In the last ten pages of the "Second Dialogue" Bruno discusses the presence of the World Soul in all things, but I don't find his position coherent. He cites the analogy of the voice being present in the whole room entire and not divided into parts. The analogy is suggestive but cannot be pressed. He says that all things are animate but he differentiates between animals and what we normally call inanimate things. More problematic is his differentiation between 'natural' objects and 'artificial' objects. The wood

of the table is animate but the table as table is not. What justification do we have for saying this? Does Berkeley's God not see the table as table? The quandary comes from our trespassing where we should not tread. To my mind, all we can reasonably say is tgat it is difficult for us to imagine how a stone is animate and equally difficult to imagine how, not only a table but even my laptop, is animate. As philosophers we must confess ignorance, in our metaphysical ventures we can say that we cannot find the natural world intelligible if deprived of subjectivity; but Bruno in building his cosmology lays claim to the competence of the scientist to depict the actual state of the natural world: no exercise of pure reason can yield that. When Whitehead ventured into cosmology, he developed a conceptual system enabling us to transcend the 'fallacy of misplaced concreteness', but he did not call that science: he showed how we may practise science within the limited possibilities of science while rescuing our sanity by preserving our live communion with living nature. Alas! neither philosophers nor scientists understood Whitehead.

*****

Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) could have been a second Plotinus, creating a new expression of the metaphysical in-

sight of Plato in an original imaginative vision. Instead he aspired for more and showed that in philosophy the more can be inferior to the less.

Bruno absorbed the the rich Platonic concept of the World Soul, but while Plato in in the *Timaeus* houses the insight in a confessed cosmological fable (which Whitehead equally with Plotinus found inspiring), Bruno imprisoned it in a in a haughtily majestic system.

The comprehensive system hovering restlessly between science and metaphysics could neither be good science nor genuine metaphysics. Bruno finds fault with Galileo for his shortcomings, but Galileo's shortcomings were dictated by the proper methodology of physical science.

Plotinus erred when he tried to support the Platonic core of his philosophy with Aristotelian logic but happily he did not make a mix of the two. Bruno despite his denigration of Aristotle shared Aristotle's worst error, the chimerical dream of erecting a science of philosophy.

D. R. Khashaba

January 13, 2021

BRADLEY REVISITED I

I first read *Appearance and Reality* when I was pergaps around twenty. When in my sixties I started my philosophical writings *Appearance and Reality* was to me no more than a vague memory. Though for the past few years I have had a digital version on my laptop I only went ro it to refer to specific points. I now intend to 'read' the book and will perhaps write a series of notes.

Bradley's Preface to the 1893 edition is a lesson in humility. He describes the work as "an essay in metaphysics" and continues: "Neither in form nor extent does it carry out the idea of a system". Further he says, "The book is a more or less desultory handling of perhaps the chief questions in metaphysics." And that is exactly how I will take it, namely, as a survey of the chief questions in metaphysics which I will reflect on along with a great English thinker who dared to break through the narrow confines of British Empiricism. Perhaps what remarks I will have to make about Bradley's own special outlook will mainly come in the course of going through his Introduction.

At the outset of the Introduction Bradley says that the writer on metaphysics is confronted by prejudices hostile to his stidy, then Bradley offers some remarks on thee prejudices and preconceptions adverse to metaphysics in general. I quote Bradley's remarks in full:

> **"We may agree, perhaps, to understand by metaphysics an attempt to know reality as against mere appearance, or the study of first principles or ultimate truths, or again the effort to comprehend the universe, not simply piecemeal or by fragments, but somehow as a whole."**

In the first place let me remark that these purportedly alternative formulations of the metaphysical problem are in truth only the trunk, the ear, the tusk, the tail, of the metaphysical elephant, that is, various aspects of the self-same thing. Bradley goes on to rebut the objections and prejudices against metaphysics. I neither think his rebuttals will satisfy the objectors nor do I agree with Bradley's position. I will try to explain my position briefly and that will suffice to show how and why my position differs from Bradley's.

All argument with the Empiricists is futile. The Empiricists and the Metaphysicians simply speak different

languages. We tell them that we speak of Reality, they kick stones and say, "this is reality." That is why when Plato says that the philosopher is a lover of reality (*Republic* VI) he hastens to explain that by reality he does not mean things seen or heard or touched but ideas envisaged by the mind.

Bradley asserts that we have knowledge of reality, partial and imperfect but true. He even says: "I am so bold as to believe that we have knowledge of the Absolute." To my mind, all the reality we know is the reality of our inner being, the reality within us. A reality outside us – be it of God or of the Absolute or of an ideal universe – can neither be known by the methods of empirical science nor by pure reason. In this I am with Kant when he is true to his better insight.

Continuing his apology for metaphysics Bradley says:

"And there is a further reason which, with myself perhaps, has even more weight. All of us, I presume, more or less, are led beyond the region of ordinary facts. Some in one way and some in others, we seem to touch and have communion with what is beyond the visible world. In various manners we find something higher,

which both supports and humbles, both chastens and transports us."

This is beautifully put and I most emphatically agree that that is the highest attainment and the richest fruit of the philosophical endeavor. But, in my view, all of this begins and ends within our inner reality. For all the moral ideals, aesthetic values, metaphysical insights, that constitute our spiritual plane of being, are gifts of the mind and have all their reality within us. Not in vain did the mystic Al-Hallaj pay his life for proclaiming: "I am the Truth."

D. R. Khashaba

January 14, 2021

BRADLEY REVISITED II

Of he reality and unreality of perceptible things (and that is to say, of all things extraneous to our subjectivity), there should be no need for further controversy since all that can be said has been said already.

(1) Socrates distinguished the intelligible and the perceptible. This gives us two separate realms each with its distinct mode of being.

(2) Accordimg to Kant, the perceptible, under the name 'phenomena', is the subject-matter of scientific investigation; in the intelligible sphere the mind reflects on its pure ideas.

(3) Whitehead's critique of the fallacy of misplaced concreteness teaches us that the conceptual fictions of science, necessary and useful in their proper sphere, should not

cast any shadow of doubt on the veracity and vivacity of our sensuous experience.

If we absorb and combine these three oracles we will see that all controversy about the reality and unreality of perceptible things is no more than a verbal muddle.

I have written the above before entering on "Book I. Appearance", of *Appearance and Reality*, and I may have nothing to add while going through the first few chapters of the book. In any case I will try to keep to the necessary minimum in my comments.

*****

The first few limes of Chapter I, "Primary and Secondary Qualities", discloses the whole strategy of Bradley in Book I. We read:

> **"I shall point out that the world ... contradicts itself; and is therefore appearance, and not reality."**

About the deceptiveness of the senses Plato left nothing more to be said. But that is not what makes the external world 'appearance and not reality' in the more significant sense. What is truly significant is the Kantian insight that we cannot know what is behind or beneath the sensuous presentations. The first metaphysical insight for any

mind endowed with the metaphysical sense (or, perhaps better said, afflicted with 'divine insanity') is that the world is not what is really real, that the world cannot support itself. The metaphysical urge is the aspiration for the All, the Whole, the mysterious Power that "wields the world with never-wearied love, / Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above" (Shelley). To anyone not afflicted with that divine madness nothing is real but the solid rock that Dr. Johnson proved real with a kick by his foot. Russell, Carnap, Ryle were not stupid: their merciful karma spared them the bite of the metaphysical bug.

I pass by Chapters II, III, IV, and V without a word. Bradley wages his war against the reality of the natural world with one strategy and one weapon. He shows that our conceptual representations can all be shown to involve contradictoriness. So what? Not only our conceptions can be shown to involve contradictoriness but all particular, determinate, finite things are necessarily hemmed with negations and contradictions, but that is their nature, their character, their *raison d'être*. Without finitude, contradiction, negation, without being passing into non-being, there can be no world vibrating with life. We would have Parmenides's One, without form, without quality, withoit life, and despite Parmenides's insightful equating of *einai* with

noein, his One would think of nothing and itself be nothing. That is why in my philosophy Creativity is not only ascribed to Reality but is seen as the First Principle of Reality: Creativity is Reality and Reality is Creativity in the philosophy of Creative Eternity.

I expected to have something to say in connection with Chapter VI, "Causation", but Bradley is not interested in reflecting on the mystery of things coming to be: instead, he continues his fruitless assault on the contradictions involved in various manners of representing causation. This does not have anything like the value of Hume's baring of the fictionality of the empirical concept of causation. Bradley does not even show any sign of being aware of Kant's answer to Hume.

The same goes for Chapter VII, "Activity". What a world of difference there is between Bradley's treatment of this fecund term and Plato's affirmation that whatever is in any sense real is no other thing than _dunamis_, an affirmation which Whitehead out of all modern philosophers, found pregnant with profound significance.

Chapter VIII, "Things", basically asks" What is a thimg? This of course is a question of lexicography. A thing is what we agree to call a thing. Of course, in such a

vague, loose term you can discover contradictions to no end. Perhaps with the next chapter on "The Meanings of Self", we may have a difference. I will therefore stop at this point, hoping to find in what follows richer fare — that is, if my rapidly fading eyesight does not force me to stop.

D. R. Khashaba

January 15, 2021

BRADLEY REVISITED III

Bradley proceeds on the principle that nothing is real but Absolute Reality. On this principle we can only end on Nothingness. For any particular, definite existence must fall short of full reality. Plato says that what is wholly real is wholly knowable, what is in no way real is in no way knowable, and that which is imperfectly real is imperfectly knowable. That is the sphere of belief and opinion (as opposed to true knowledge) which extends to the whole of our world. That is the substance of our own finite being, of all that we can subject to thought and to reasoning. Only on our spiritual plane do we approach full reality. (See P.S. below.)

In Chapter IX, "The Meanings of Self", two considerations militate against the notion of the self. First, the self however we define it, is limited and falls short of full reali-

ty. Secondly, the notion of self in common usage, including philosophical usage, is vague and confused; different conceptions and applications will necessarily conflict.

When Socrates subjected any notion to critical examination, he was not denying the reality of the thing examined. The Socratic elenchus aimed at helping Socrates' interlocutor to see the confusedness of his ideas and aims, the error of his value judgments, and hopefully to gain a clearer understanding of himself.

*****

Chapter X has the deceptively promising title "The Reality of Self". Early in the first paragraph the promise is shattered in the same breath as it is hinted at:

> **"That selves exist and are identical in some sense is indubitable. But the doubt is whether their sameness, as we apprehend it, is really intelligible, and whether it can be true in the character in which it comes to us. Because otherwise, while it will be certain that the self and its identity somehow belomg to reality, it will be equally certain that this fact has somehow been essentially misapprehended. And our conclusion must be**

that, since as such, it contradicts itself, this fact must, as such, be unreal. The self also will in the end be no more than appearance."

This sums up Chapter X. It is perhaps significant that Bradley shuns the pregnant notion of soul, preferring the loose and ambiguous term 'self'.

What Bradley's astute arguments show is what Plato unequivocally maintained, namely that no determinate formulation of thought or language can be adequate to reality. Bradley does not even approach Kant's tentative efforts to designate the transcendental unity of apperception.

*****

I pass Chapter XI, "Phenomenalism", without comment and of Chapter XII, "Things in Themselves", which concludes Book I, I will only say a few words.

Bradley misunderstands and misrepresents Kant's position, without referring to Kant explicitly. Indeed thus far Bradley has not referred to any philosopher by name, which makes it impracticable to discuss reasonably the objections he makes to practically anonymous standpoints.

Yet the conclusion of Chapter XI and of the whole of Book I sounds encouraging:

> **"Everything so far, which we have seen, has turned out to be appearance. ... But to deny its existence or to divorce it from reality is out of the question. ... it can have no place where to live except reality. And reality, set on one side and apart from all appearance, would assuredly be nothing. Hence what is certain is that, in some way, these inseparables are joined. This is the positive result which has emerged from our discussion. Our failure so far lies in this, that we have not found the way in which appearances can belong to reality. And to this further task we must now address ourselves, with however little hope of more than partial satisfaction."**

Let me end this paper on this happy note and hope that we will find the discussion of Reality more rewarding.

D. R. Khashaba

January 16, 2021

<u>P.S.</u>: I cited above Plato's saying that what is wholly real is wholly knowable. I have to clarify that Plato here did not have ultimate Reality in view. Ultimate Reality, the Form

of the Good, is beyond knowledge and beyond understanding. In speaking of what is wholly real and therefore wholly knowable Plato was thinking of the intelligible ideas. To explain this adequately requires and deserves a special essay. For the moment I wanted simply to obviate a possible misunderstanding.

BRADLEY REVISITED IV

INTRUDYCTIRY:

[The following introductory note may serve as a partial fulfillment of the promise given in the P.S. to the preceding paper.]

The opening chapter of Book II has an ambitious, not to say audacious, title: "The General Nature of Reality". For who dare speak of the general nature of reality? Let us say that we have three levels of reality, which it would be highly desirable to designate by three distinct words.

(1) The things we call real in the common walks of life and that Empiricists and materialists insist are the whole of reality. These I call existents or actualities.

(2) Ideals, values, and principles that have their whole being in the mind and nowhere but in the mind. These, following Plato, I regard as all the realities that we have access to. I deliberately refrain from saying "that we know". We may give any of these realities a name but can never say what it is: this is the lesson of the Socratic elenchus: an idea is not definable in terms extraneous to its reality. The meaning of a value or a principle is its own self-luminosity and that meaning is affirmed in what it breeds. Thus in Diotima's speech in the *Symposium*, while we were following the ascent of the lover in quest of Love, we find ourselves ending in the vision of Beauty. This is not a puzzle. For love is not a thing fixed in isolation: love is a state of being, a mode of intelligence that decks all things in beauty.

(3) Finally, a soul whose pristine purity is not over-clouded by the accidents of our terrestrial existence, has a yearning, a longing for "something afar from the sphere of our sorrow" (Shelley), an ideal of perfection. This is the notion, the ideal, of metaphysical Reality, Ultimate Reality. This we cannot know. We can only voice our yearning, our aspiration, in song, in myth, in mystic vision.

I have written the above before reading a word in Bradley's chapter on "The General Nature of Reality" and I may have thus exhausted all I have to say in comment on Bradley's text. Let us see.

****

Bradley's first and absolute criterion of reality is that reality has a "positive nature exclusive of discord". Our actual world shows discord everywhere and that is why Plato asserts its unreality so emphatically that even intelligent critics have taken him to deny its existence altogether. But to ascribe any character to Reality is to load it with contradictions. To satisfy Bradley's criterion is to denude Reality of all character, as Parmenides had to do. What can such an insipid sterile Reality mean to us? And what right do we have to assume that the criteria set by our mind hold outside our subjectivity? Mystics spoke of Nothingness but rhat symbolized a state of vibrant being and absorbing vision.

On the other hand, if our search for Reality take the route of asking: "How could anything be? How did the world come to be?" then any answer in terms of a first cause – be it a transcendent God or a Big Bang – is absurd; it explains nothing; it in turn asks for a cause. Being

is an ultimate mystery; the world is an ultimate mystery. We fool ourselves if we think that reason can unveil the mystery. Some of us are never troubled by the question; others are content to drop it. But there are those who continue to be irked by the question. They create myths. From very early in human history humans created myths to make sense of the mysteries of being and of life. The audacious Greeks, some twenty-six or twenty-seven centuries ago, demanded that their myths satisfy their minds. That was the beginning of philosophizing. They created 'rational' myths, myths characterized by being more or less intrinsically coherent and consistent. Even so, they were still myths. But while Plato frankly called his myths 'likely tales', Aristotle claimed to arrive at demonstrable truth by sheer reason. Ever since, metaphysicians have been victims of the Aristotelian illusion. What helped the illusion to survive was the false analogy of mathematical truth. (I have written amply on mathematics and logic as barren closed formal systems that, in the words of Wittgenstein, "say nothing".

Even after Kant showed the error of dogmatic metaphysics, metaphysicians continued blithely to dream their dreams and believe their dreams. In my first book, *Let Us Philosophize* (1998, 2008), I sought to show the creative na-

ture of philosophical thinking; in "Philosophy as Prophecy" (the first version of which was, I think, written in 2000) I underlined that message. In 2016 I published *Creative Eternity: A Metapjysical Myth*, and I opened the book with "Why A Myth". I have been harping on this to this day. But who would pay attention to what an unknown, unlearned, non-academic would-be philosopher says? Most probably I will die (which cannot be far off) without anybody taking notice, until, maybe centuries later (if humankind survives) a more fortunate thinker hits on the same idea.

After all of this I don't think I will have anything more to say regarding Bradley's metaphysical stand. In the first paragraph of this chapter Bradley says:

> **"The present Book, to some extent, falls into two divisions. The first of these deals mainly with the general character of reality, and with the defence of this against a number of objections. Then from this basis, in the second place, I shall go on to consider mainly some special features."**

I will try to pass through the 'first division' without comment. It is on the 'special features' of the 'second division' that I may have something to say.

I will end this paper at this point asking the Reader's forgiveness.

D. R. Khashaba

January 17, 2021

BRADLEY REVISITED V

APOLOGY

It seems that my ending the preceding paper with asking the Reader's forgiveness was prophetic, for I have to bring this series of notes to an end.

I read chapter after chapter in Book II to find nothing bud an ocean of empty verbiage studded with logical bravado. I thought that in the chapter on Evil at any rate there would be something to discuss. I was disappointed; I could not make head or tail of it. I fought a temptation to quote a lomg passage to let readers judge for themselves.

Bradley forbids us to ascribe morality to the Absolute. But he insists that the Absolute is perfect; apparently its perfection is confined to logical consistency and yet he maintains that all the discord and contradiction he had

been decrying in Book I must have their place in the Absolute.

All that Bradley says, if it means anything at all, can apply only to a sterile structure of formal logic. Yet Bradley claims to be speaking of an actual Absolute to which our actual world somehow relates.

Of the Absolute (Bradley's or Hegel's) I know nothing. Of the world outside my subjectivity I know phenomena and regularities of phenomena that common sense and science weave into tentative hypotheses useful for transacting with the world surrounding us. Of a power that may rule and conduct the world I know nothing: it might be an unpredictable Jehovah or a vicious Ahriman or sheer blind chance. What I know is that we human beings have an inner world peopled with ideals, values, and dreams that give our life meaning and value. That is the spiritual world that is the proper domain of philosophical thinking and metaphysical speculation. When I cite approvingly Shelley's Power that sustains and kindles, I am referring to an ideal that sustains and kindles my soul, not to an actuality out there.

I hope the Reader will excuse me for discontinuing the notes on Bradley. I can make better use of the little time I

have before I am forced to stop by my rapidly fading eye-sight or death, whichever comes first.

D. R. Khashaba

January 18, 2021

UNITY OF HUMAM CULTURE

Humanity is in a most wretched state. It has come to a stage where it is completely united in impending doom while pitiably disunited by narrowly conceived selfish interests, by widely disparate levels and conditions of living, and by fundamentally diverse religions and cultures. Thus the sources of disunity are twofold: material and spiritual.

Clear-sighted thinkers have for long seen that humans, to live in peace and enjoy the best life possible, must live as one family. Increasingly during the past century the need for unity has been insistently voiced by a number of enlightened minds but the voice of sanity has been generally ignored.

In the most advanced countries an economy oriented towards undiscriminating increase of production and of wealth, abetted by a pathological culture of consumerism,

has resulted in a two-forked evil: not only have the increasing riches in the advanced countries been translated into increasing misery, disease, famine, and ignorance in the poorer countries, but in the very capitals of the opulent countries sectors of the population suffer malnutrition and die for want of medical care.

That is the material dimension of the problem. On the spiritual side we find the differences of faiths, cultures, and traditions, most profoundly marked in the fundamental divide separating the world into East and West. (I hope the special sense in which I am using these terms will be clear from what follows.)

It is a pity that the languages, scripts, and traditions of the great Asiatic civilizations differ so radically from those of the Middle East and Europe that have a fair measure of homogeneity so that a modern Christian European finds it much easier to understand Judaism and Islam than Confucianisn, Taoism, Brahmanism, or Buddhism. This is the second major barrier impeding the unity of human culture which is necessary for uniting humanity as one family.

A necessary condition of attaining a common human culture is an enlightenment that understands all religions and cultural traditions as historical human imaginative

ventures towards making sense of the mysteries in which humans are engulfed. When this understanding is attained the core wisdom in all religions and traditions becomes common human property. An educated European in, say, the eighteenth century – before the 'scientific outlook' narrowed our minds – could understand and love Socrates' prayer (at the end of Plato's *Phaedrus*) to "beloved Pan" and the "other deities in this place' without believing in them. Thus when the diverse world faiths and cultures become part of the common human cultural heritage they will serve mutual understanding and amity instead of spreading hate and enmity and violence.

The valuable work of scholars in translating and interpreting ancient Chinese and Indian classics cannot go far in making the Eastern cultures common human property. What would help would be a greater infiltration into the West of works by minds bred and reared in the Eastern tradition similar to the infiltration actually going on in the opposite direction. Thr pity is that it is more likely that the Asians will import the science and technology of the West, dumping the spiritual cultures of West and East equally.

Even if we start without delay taking steps in the right direction it will be an almost hopeless race against the imminent doom bred and nurtured by human greed, human stupidity, and human ignorance.

D. R. Khashaba

January 19, 2021

THE BOUNDS OF REASON

That reason has limits is a truism formally acknowledged by everybody. The true extent of the limits of reason and reasoning is ignored by everybody and most of all by the most brilliant minds among philosophers and scientists.

I have just read Arthur O. Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being* and have been astounded by the mass of bad, false, and absurd arguments, not Lovejoy's but of the prominent thinkers whose doctrines and views he surveys.

Why is it so difficult, not for the common run of humble individuals, nut for the most renowned of philosophers, to see that all questions about ultimate origins, final ends, ultimate essences, are strictly beyond – I will not say human reason but – all reason?

Reason, or better said, the art of reasoning, since reason is not a substance, not an entity, but an activity: the art

of reasoning was developed – however that may have been – to relate a group of thoughts or facts in some coherent arrangement. Thus reasoning must always have some given determinate content. In other words, reasoning always proceeds from given, determinate postulates. This should become evident when we consider the abstracted form of reasoning called logic. No logical structure yields anything beyond what is put into it. Pure logic is barren. As Wittgenstein has it, logic says nothing.

Hence all questions of theology or dogmatic metaphysics is strictly beyond reason because we cannot feed into it any ascertained determinate content.

To answer any question about the origin of the world we must have had access to that origin. To answer a question about the final end of the world we must have ascertained that there is such an end. Any answers given to such questions in the state of our ignorance, since it necessarily proceeds from arbitrary suppositions can always be refuted and countered with an opposed but equally ungrounded position. The whole history of theologies and dogmatic metaphysics provides ample evidence of this. This was illustrated in Kant's "Antinomy of Pure Reason", though Kant himself sinned against his own better insight.

One such question is that about the infinity or finitude of the universe. I have repeatedly asserted the absurdity of the notion of infinity but I was unguarded in my expression, for I decidedly was not taking sides in the controversy. My intent was to show that the notion of infinity taken absolutely is nonsensical though mathematicians use a fictional concept of infinity as a working tool. But asserting the absurdity of the notion of infinity does not imply acceptance of the postulate of a finite world, for this is equally a chimera, equally absurd. What we should say is that the question itself is meaningless since we can have no coherent idea either of an infinite world or of a finite world.

Wittgenstein had true metaphysical insight when he insisted that we cannot make any statement about the World; he tried to make Bertrand Russell understand thus; Russell couldn't because he had killed the metaphysical urge in him, had blinded the metaphysical eye in him. (See Russell's own account of this in *My Philosophical Development*.p.86.)

Plato speaks of the Form of the Good; I speak of Creative Eternity. These are imaginative visions that give us the comfort of lending intelligibility to our life experiences, to the ideal worlds in which we live purest, highest life possi-

ble to a human being. I deny emphatically that my metaphysical vision is meant as a factual picture of the world outside my subjective being. If all metaphysicians made the same avowal their visions would be imaginative creations that may be enjoyed by everybody.

What was Plato's position on this point? That is a tricky question that I will try to tackle in the next paper.

D. R. Khashaba

January 22, 2021

RIDDLE OF PLATO

PREFATORY

Plato has been grossly misunderstood and misrepresented from his lifetime to this day. This is the inescapable fate of all original and profound philosophers, but in the case of Plato it is compounded by three distinct circumstances which I will take up successively in the following sections. The extent of the misunderstanding and misrepresentation is evidenced by the widely divergent evaluations and interpretations of his philosophy. While throughout more than two millennia many philosophers and poets have found in him inspiration, many learned writers, especially recently, have seen in him nothing but error and folly. I will only mention one striking example. John Burnet is unquestionably a great scholar to whom all students of philosophy are greatly indebted for his masterly edition of Plato's works;

but if Burnet's own summing up of Plato's contribution in his *Greek Philosophy from Thales to Plato* were passably fair, Plato would not have been worthy of Burnet's editorial labours.

I

The first circumstance hindering the understanding of Plato's philosophy is Plato's greatest merit. For all we know, he was the first to see clearly that the profoundest insights into the mysteries and realities with which philosophical thinking is concerned can never be confined or conveyed in any formulations of language or thought. They can only be intimated in myth to minds irked by those mysteries and thirsting for those realities. Hence it is ludicrous to find fault with Plato, as many scholars do, for his want of system. In a genuine philosopher like Plotinus, who was inspired by Plato, the profound insights and the reasoned arguments forming a system are two completely isolated islands.

II

The second circumstance impeding the understanding of Plato is that he wrote nothing but dramatic pieces. It is not easy to separate the dramatic exigencies from the seriously intended thought content. Sometimes Socrates argues *ad*

***hominem*. Sometimes he has to leave unquestioned widely held beliefs or positions or the implications inhering in a common Greek idiom or phrase. Sometimes also Plato would give precedence to dramatic propriety, portraying an intense or tricky discussion with the usual blemishes of error or forgetfulness. In the *Euthyphro* Socrates has to allow the man his convictions and assumptions. In the two *Hippias* pieces he makes fun of the inflated sophist. In the *Protagoras* he has to humour the respectable elderly teacher. You can't take a statement from Plato's dialogues out of context any more than you can take a statement from *Hamlet* out of context, but many scholars do just that.**

III

The third impeding circumstance is more serious. In its deleterious effect it comes next to the first, but while the first arose from Plato's merit, the third is due in the first place to a fault or faults in Plato amd in the second place to circumstantial pressures.

As a pioneering original thinker, not all of his views and novel notions were crystal clear from the start or all the time. Personally I believe that when he wrote the *Phaedo*, while he had already embraced and extended Socrates' distinction between the intelligible and the perceptible, the

full import of the notion of the intelligible was not clear in his mind. I take it that this is why the all-important Socratic 'autobiography' (96a-101e) remained confused and cloudy, in contrast to the admirable exposition earlier in the dialogue of the role of the intelligible ideas in the philosophical life. The mature vision of the central part of the *Republic* (473e-541b), I believe, was born in Plato's prophetic soul very early but did not find adequate symbolic expression until he wrote those oracular seventy pages.

Next, when he instituted the Academy and became busy with administrative work and with teaching, his attention was more and more drawn to research and to the investigation of particular questions and to experimentation with new techniques and new methodologies. I think the *Sophist* was partly and the *Statesman* largely experiments in the method of collection and division. I conjecture that the *Philebus* was undertaken in response to a controversy between members of the Academy.

Again, Plato could be misled by passive concurrence in certain Hellenic conventional attitudes or convictions and by passively absorbed implications of Hellenic idiom, such as the representation of love as a desire for possessing the good, which runs counter to his insightful representation

of love and of wisdom as a joyful outflow of goodness, beauty, and reality. (*Republic* 490a-b and the Form of the Good, *Symposium*, the beatific vision of Beauty and *tokos en kalôi*.)

In my *Plato: An Interpretation (*2005) I insisted that what I give is my own interpretation, a confession of the inspiration I find in Plato, and that I make no claim of expounding Plato's own thought or convictions and make no pretense of disclosing Plato's true meaning.

D. R. Khashaba

January 24, 2021

REASONING IN ETHICS

I am afraid I will have nothing new to say in this paper but will be repeating things I said again and again, but it seems they have to be reiterated over and over and over.

Reasoning has no place in Ethics. Ethics gives the rationale of morality or of a particular morality. Morality is the adoption of a way of life, which is to say the adoption of the kind of person one wants to be.

Adopting a morality is governed by the kind of person one is; and the kind of person one is is determined by the values one absorbs from one's life experiences and the influences one is subjected to in one's life journey from the womb to the tomb.

Every rational being consciously or unconsciously has a morality or, more often, moralities cohabiting in one's psychic build with one or the other of the moralities having

the upper hand in various circumstances. Only a Socrates or a Gautama Buddha has a completely integrated morality.

Ethics extracts from this or that morality the rationale within which it makes sense.

Only speculative minds are concerned with ethics and a well-integrated person will only turn to ethics as a matter of theoretical interest. Kant's ethics complicated and befogged his moral insights.

All controversy in the ethical sphere is futile. Opposed views arise (1) when the contestants mean different things by the common terms they use, or (2) when they have different moralities in mind. Such controversies can go on interminably without producing conviction or true enlightenment. Such are the theoretical controversies of the learned.

Controversies in the sphere of practice relate to morals rather than ethics. These arise when there is a clash of values. For in our world, in our human life, hemmed with negations, limitations, and imperfections, positive values can clash, as for instance on the question of abortion or the question of euthanasia. Such practical controversies have no final solution. The fanatic enthusiasm for the one side

or the other is irrational and morally wrong. In individual cases such dilemmas can only be approached in the humble spirit of being constrained to choose between two evils. In the case of laying down rules or laws there must be compromise, always subject to revision and amendment.

qThese thoughts were triggered when I began reading *Methods in Ethics* (Virtual Issue No.3, an Aristotelian Sociey Publication, 2015). I struggled through some 60 pages. When I came to the paper "Practical Dualism" by E. E. Constance Jones and read:

> **"We find, of course, in Plato demonstrations (1) that the Good is Virtue and (2) that the Good is Pleasure; yet these demonstrations are not complementary but contradictory, setting forth what were for Plato opposed views of the ultimate Good."**

— I could take no more. I take it that the lines quoted allude to the *Philebus*. I know that many erudite writers argue that the *Philebus* deals with the ultimate Good. But such a reading of the *Philebus* justifies, in my view, Heraclitus's assertion that much learning does not give understanding. I believe that any unprejudiced reading of the dialogue will show that the whole discussion was about the normal good life for an ordinary human being. That Plato finds occasion to digress into metaphysical speculations is

neither here nor there. In the *Sophist* an exercise in the method of collection and division gives occasion for some of Plato's profoundest metaphysical speculations.

P.S.: I made a distinction above between morality and ethics. I insist on the necessity of the distinction but not on the terminology. I know that in many serious philosophical discussions the term Ethics covers the whole of moral philosophy.

D. R. Khashaba

January 26, 2021

NOTE OM SCHOPEMHAUER

I have frequently cited Schopenhauer as a philosopher with an original philosophical vision. There was a mistake hidden in that statement. However, my prime purpose in this note is not so much to correct my assessment of Schopenhauer as to clarify my notion of metaphysical vision.

Schopenhauer highly esteemed Kant but in his philosophy he breached the bounds Kant had clearly set for empirical science on the one hand and pure reason on the other hand. Those bounds were the same as the bounds marked out by the Socratic-Platonic insight separating investigation into nature from investigation into ideas.

Previously I had taken Schopenhauer's detailed forays into the phenomena of the natural world as simple illustrations of Schopenhauer's outlook. But I have lately been reading his *Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Rea-*

son and _On the Will in Nature_ I found that Schopenhauer intended his natural observations as grounds for a 'philosophy of nature' as much as Empedocles or Anaxagoras did. I saw that I was mistaken in taking Schopenhauer's philosophy as a metaphysical vision in the special sense I introduced in my writings.

Schopenhauer evaded the worst error of Leibniz and the Post-Kantian Idealists who thought their systems were arrived at by reasoning and were demonstrably ascertained by reason. Schopenhauer had nothing but contempt and ridicule for such word-juggling sophistries.

Schopenhauer's philosophy had in a limited way some similarity to Whitehead's. Whitehead produced an ideal representation of the world in in original metaphysical notions through which we could see the world as an intelligible organic whole. This did not constitute an integrative metaphysical vision. Whitehead's profound particular metaphysical insights are to be found in _Religion in the Making_ and _Modes of Thought_ and _Adventures of Ideas_ and also scattered in _Process and Reality_ but not in the overall picture of that majestic work which Whitehead subtitles "An Essay in Cosmology". Whitehead's philosophy was also definitely not science. Science could not carry on its in-

vestigations in and through Whitehead's creative notions. In connection with science, Whitehead's great service was his debunking of the Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness. Whitehead showed that science works – and has to work – with lifeless abstractions but to take that for the real world is the height of folly. The true world we live in is the world of colour and scent and touch and taste of our living experience.

Schopenhauer's philosophy has some superficial resemblance to, but is not equal to, Whitehead's. Schopenhauer offers an intelligible, unified representation of the world and of life, a representation inspired and fuelled by a personal outlook. It may be convincing; may help us humans make the best of our sorry condition; but it is neither science nor metaphysics, can claim neither factual truth nor metaphysical reality. It is a work of creative literature such as Thomas Hardy or Baudelaire could have produced.

In my view, metaphysics, properly understood, has nothing to do with any actual or possible world. A genuine metaphysics (there can be any number of alternative metaphysical visions) gives us a vision of the world as an imaginative intelligible, integrated, ideal organism. Such a vi-

sion creates – in the best and strictest sense of the word – a realm of ideal reality wherein we can enjoy understanding, live the sublimest spiritual experiences, exercise creativity in good deeds, beautiful works, intelligent thoughts. This gives us a true realm of spiritual life wherein we can live a worthy life even if the actual existent world outside us and the world as a whole be governed by Satan. That the world is or is not so governed is anybody's guess and nobody's certainty. For the highest human wisdom is the confession of ignorance.

Accordingly, genuine metaphysical philosophy is most akin to poetry: its insights are neither empirically verifiable nor logically demonstrable. It differs from poetry only in that, while poetry works with specific images and feelings, metaphysical philosophy works with more general ideas.

That understanding of metaphysical thinking is inherent in the thought of ancient Indian and Chinese sages; in the West it seems to have been glimpsed by Heraclitus and Parmenides; it was securely grasped by Plato and by Plotinus at their best; thereafter it was intimated by poets and mystics; but among professional philosophers and erudite scholars it was completely lost. I claim hoping that it will

not be accounted arrogance of me, that I am the first to revive it in its pristine purity and clarity, unmixed even with Plato's idolatrous devotion to mathematics or Plotinus's infatuation with Aristotle.

D. R. Khashaba

January 30, 201`

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

PREFACE

Kant famously summed up the business of philosophy in three questions: (1) What do I know? (2) What must I do? (3) What can I hope for? I have more than once (perhaps three times) given a summary answer to all three questions. It occurred to me to give fuller answers to these questions in three successive papers. Here is the first.

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

I

SCIENCE

Science began as soon as human beings acquired reflective thinking which distinguishes humans from the other members of the animal kingdom. Humans early noted that nat-

ural things and natural happenings have regular habits. Fire burns dry wood. Earth mixed with water becomes something with qualities of its own, not found in water by itself or in earth by itself. The god that comes up from behind those hills brings light and takes the light away with him when he goes down on the opposite side. And humans learned to put these regularities to practical use.

This was not only the beginning but was the very essence of all science and the foundation of human civilization.

We can say that Locke was right in maintaining that our sensuous impressions provide the whole basic content of our knowledge. But Locke left out something of prime importance. The regularities of natural happenings as sensuous impressions impinge on the senses as separate successive elements. We only perceive the regularities as regularities when the mind unites the successive impressions in an intelligible pattern. Earth and water mixed together become mud or clay. Only this is perception, only this is basic elemental knowledge. In turning the disparate impressions into a pattern the mind is interpreting the impressions into an intelligible idea. This is the essence of the Socratic-

Platonic notion of ineligible ideas, forms that confer meaning on natural objects and happenings.

In time the mind works simple patterns of regularities into more complex patterns. The mind thus creates second-tier and third-tier patterns. These higher complexes of patterns are the substance of all the special sciences: chenistry, physics, biology, astronomy, what you will. These are all ideal interpretations of primary impressions, they translate primary impressions and first-tier patterns into complex conceptual systems.

The substance of knowledge is not the primal raw sensuous presentations but the primary patterns and the higher and higher patterns created by the mind.

Primitive peoples saw the sun cone up in the morning bringing warmth and light. This they called day. The sun went down at the end of the day. This was night. The Egyptians and the Babylonians observed the regular visible movements of sun, moon, planets and spoke not only of days and nights but of years and seasons. Ptolemy on the basis of the visible movements of the 'heavenly bodies' presented a neat pattern of their movements around the earth. Kepler, Copernicus, Galileo made closer observations and presented a pattern of the earth, moon, planets

moving around the sun. Newton presented a pattern of greater generality. Einstein presented a revised pattern. These were all ideal interpretations, these were all translations of the observed regularities in creative conceptual complexes.

All that I have been saying here agrees with Kant's affirmation that scientific investigation is confined to the sphere of natural appearances (phenomena). I add: it is all ideal interpretation, it is all approximation, it is all provisional subject to revision and to falsification.

This covers the whole of natural science and, strictly speaking, the term 'knowledge' should be confined to this. Practically it is not possible to avoid giving 'knowledge' a wider connotation, but at any rate in philosophical discussion it would help avoid much confusion if the term is thus restricted.

qIn support of what I have been saying I quote below excerpts from two of the greatest scientists of the twentieth century.

I couldn't find better corroboration not only for what i said anove but for the position I have advocated in all my writings than the following:

“I believe that the first step in the setting of a ‘real external World’ is the formation of the concept of bodily objects and of bodily objects of various kinds. Out of the multitude of our sense experiences we take, mentally and arbitrarily, certain repeatedly occurring complexes of sense impressions ... and we correlate to tl1em a concept — the concept of the bodily object. Considered logically this concept is not identical with the totality of sense impressions referred to; but it is a free creation of the human (or animal) mind.” (Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions*, p.298 of the digital version).

The following clear account of the nature and limits of scientific theory ps extracted from Stephen Hawking’s *Brief History of Time*:

“In order to talk about the nature of the universe and to discuss questions such as whether it has a beginning or an end, you have to be clear about what a scientific theory is. I shall take the simpleminded view that a theory is just a model of the universe, or a restricted part of it, and a set of rules that relate quantities in the model to observations that we make. It exists only in our minds and does not have any other reality (whatever that might mean). ...

“Any physical theory is always provisional, in the sense that it is only a hypothesis: you can never prove it. ...” (Ste[hen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*).

II

MATHEMATICS

Strictly speaking, mathematics does not give knowledge, though in the hands of science it is a most potent tool in scientific investigation.

Mathematics is a pure creation of the mind. Number is wholly a creation of the mind. In Geometry point, line., triangle, circle are all pure ideas that have no being and can have no being outside the mind, though we can configure shapes in nature approximating to our idea of triangle or circle; to see that these are only artificial constructs it is enough to reflect that there can never be an actual geometrical point or geometrucal line in nature.

Descartes said you cannot prove that the angles of a triangle must be equal to two right angles or prove that two and two are four. Though there is a loose sense in which we may say we can prove these two statements, yet Descartes had a point. As Wittgenstein would say, this cannot be proved but it can be shown. I will explain briefly.

You cannot prove that 2 and 2 are 4. When the human mind created number, it observed a stone lying beside an-

other stone. It called the configuration Two. It created the form Two. Then it observed such a configuration with another stone lying beside the Two. The mind joined these in a new ideal pattern and called the new configuration Three. Then it observed a configuration Three with one more stone lying nearby. It combined these in a new configuration and called the new ideal pattern Four. Whenever there was a configuration that could be broken up into one and three or two and two or three and one you had the configuration Four. This needs no proof. The mind created the For, and now apprehends it as an intuition.

We come to the triangle. Let us say you have a horizontal straight line with two perpendicular lines, one at either end of the horizontal line. We call each of the angles facing the opposite one a right angle. If you incline one of the perpendicular lines towards the other or lean both perpendicular lines inwards till they meet at a point, you will find that the diminution of the right angle or of the two right angles caused by the inclination of the line or lines is compensated by the angle formed at the meeting point of the vertical lines. In the well-known geometrical experiment in Plato's *Meno* Socrates neither instructs the 'boy' nor proves anything but lets the 'boy' see that the

square constructed on the diagonal of another square has twice the area of the first square.

Pure mathematical equations yield no new information. They say nothing because they are internal operations within a closed system. Leibniz dreamed of a new 'universal characteristic' that would give positive answers not only to scientific questions but even to moral questions. That is a chimera. It was taken up by the builders of symbolic logic. Wittgenstein saw the barrenness of that. But Analytic philosophers still dream of making it yield positive knowledge. In philosophy, I maintain, the use of logical symbolism is utterly useless. In science and technology it may be a useful tool within inexorably defined limitations. I extract the following words of Einstein from a richly instructive passage that I wish I could quote at length:

> **"...as far as the propositions of mathematics refer to reality, they are not certain; and as far as they' are certain, they do not refer to reality." (Einstein, *ideas and Opinions*, p.240 of the digital version).**

III

HUMANITIES

The adoption of the attitudes and methodologies of science in such fields as history, literary criticism, aesthetics, sociology, psychology, theory of education, etc., can

perhaps within limits be of some use. But the wholesale drive towards turning such disciplines into 'exact sciences' has, in my opinion, done much more harm than good. In psychology for instance, the more the use of experiments, statistics, etc., drowns us in oceans of objective information, the farther away it takes us from understanding human beings as human beings. A psychiatrist, employing the latest and best techniques and theories, may help his patients get over some of their problems, but all of his learning will not help him understand his wife or children or his next neighbour unless true love breaks down the barriers that hide soul from soul.

IV

PHILOSOPHY

Plato tells us that when the mind in itself and by itself reflects on its pure ideas this gives us understanding of the realities and values that have their being in our inmost reality. All true philosophy is exploration of our inner reality wherein we are blessed with glimpses of insight into our unfathomable and ineffable innermost reality.

This has nothing to do with the world outside us. It gives us no objective knowledge.

Philosophers went astray when they thought that by reflection on pure ideas they can attain knowledge about the actual world or ascertainable demonstrable truths like the truths of mathematics. This delusion did great harn to philosophy. In straining for factual knowledge or logical certainty we were blinded to the inner light that alone can give us a meaningful life.

D. R. Khashaba

February 4, 2021

WHAT MUST WE DO?

1

To Kant's second question, "What must I do?", the proper answer is Lessing's oracular proclamation: *Kein Mensch muss müssen*. No human being should be subject to any absolute obligation. And the reason? The reason is that freedom is the essence of humanity.

2

When are we truly free? Only when we are fully human.

3

In true freedom we transcend the realm of nature and have our being in the realm of metaphysical reality.

4

We are fully human and therefore truly free in deeds of love and in acts of creation, in the spontaneous outflow of beauty and of intelligence.

5

We only enjoy true freedom in rare moments. Mostly we are, at best, restricted to the inferior freedom of choice.

6

Choice is bred by reflective thinking and is thus characteristic of humans as distinct from other living beings.

7

Choice is, like all happenings within nature, necessarily conditioned, though not determined, by antecedents.

8

That is why thinkers who equate freedom with choice believe that human action is not free but is determined like all natural happenings.

9

But even in this they are mistaken, for no happening in nature is strictly determined. All becoming comes with some

variation, else there could never be any development, any evolution. Begging Plato's pardon, we should say that all that is in any sense real is not simply activity but is creativity.

10

Reflective (conceptual) thinking comes to humans at a heavy price. Reflective, conceptual, thinking splits the human person in two. Only a human being can say "I am" and in saying it he alienates himself from himself.

11

A reflective human being dreams dreams, plans plans, desires what is not at hand. Hrnce a human being can covet what his neighbor has, can be greedy for more than what he can enjoy, can desire deceptive vanities.

12

All living beings live out their true nature. A rose blooms, sheds out its fragrance, greets the light with its brightness, withers, crumbles, mixes with the earth whence it sprang. A human being fritters his life away in chasing falsities and unrealities.

13

To be is to be good. True being is a constant creativity, a perpetual giving.

14

For anything truly to be is to live out its own special excellence. For a human being truly to be is to be truly human.

15

A sole human being cannot be fully human. To be fully human a person must be united with others in a loving family or in amity of true souls.

16

Whitehead said that religion is what a man does with his solitariness. Contemplative solitariness is not isolation: in contemplative solitariness a human being is one with all human beings, one with all Life, one with all Being.

17

In the history of the human race the original, smallest, and best union of humans was the family. Next came the tribe. When humans left tribal life behind them individuals were separated from other individuals and families were separated from other families. Humans lost their humanity.

Evil beset human society and the evil continued to fester to the present day.

18

The teachings of all prophets and moral teachers sought to lead humans back to their lost humanity.

19

Socrates taught that a human being's only good is the soundness of his inner being, his true being, for short, his soul. Good deeds foster the essence of a person's humanity. Bad deeds damage that essence. A person with a sound soul will not harm another and when he receives harm from another will not return harm for harm.

20

Gautama the Buddha took himself and took his followers away from the vanities and deceptions of wealth and pomp to lead a peaceful natural life in mutual amity and in tender care for all living beings.

21

Kant maintained that the only absolutely good thing is a good will. A person who finds in good will his true good will find n good will his whole reality. He will find in good

will his special virtue as a human being and the special virtue of all human beings. He will see every human being as an end in himself. Kant goes on to encrust that profound insight in maxims and rules and laws, needlessly laying himself open to misunderstandings and unjust censure.

22

What ought we to do? Willy-nilly we live out what we are. But what are we?

23

A newly-born human babe and a newly-born kitten emerge from the womb with a simple untarnished nature. The kitten lives out its natural life. But the human child soon after birth begins to build up an enclosing conceptual crust constituted of closely or loosely interlocking evaluations, aims, desires, beliefs, traditions, dreams, ideals. That enclosing crust forms an individual's character; that character prescribes the individual's mode and quality of life.

24

Most of us most of the time live within their particular crust a common life with its scanty blessings and many sorrows.

25

A few unfortunate ones turn out to be mass murderers, serial killers, cruel despotic rulers. None of these is free. They are all victims, as Socrates affirms, of ignorance of their proper good. They are all, as Spinoza says, governed by inadequate ideas.

26

A rare few turn out to be saints, mystics, poets. These have healthy souls. They may suffer, indeed in our diseased human society, they mostly suffer the most. But these alone are truly free. These alone preserve their inner reality, their essential humanity, unsullied and unharmed till they pass away.

27

Let me close this untidy heap of fragmented thoughts by addressing this last blessed company in the words of one of their kin, words that Shelley sang in the final verses of his inspired and inspiring *Prometheus Unbound*:

> **"To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;**
> **To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;**
> **To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;**
> **To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates**

From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory”

D. R. Khashaba

February 6, 2021

WHAT CAN WE HOPE FOR?

Kant's third question was: "What can I hope for?" In posing this question Kant had in mind what we might hope for in an after-life. But the question can also be taken to refer to what we can hope for in this our worldly life. I will first briefly dismiss the question in its Kantian intention before trying to answer the second question which, in my view, is the more important and more significant one.

I

The notion of an after-life is, I think, bound up with the notion of a separate soul. It is easy to imagine how the notion of a separate soul arose independently among most peoples in different parts of the world. When the image of an absent or a departed person is seen in sleep, this is readily taken by the primitive human being to be the 'ghost' of the absent or dead person come to visit the sleeper. In time

many beliefs and many fancies gathered around this notion of an indwelling 'ghost' in every person. It was long before religious teachers and philosophers infused into the notion moral and metaphysical depths. One could compose a thick volume tracing the metamorphoses of the *psuchê* from the ghost of Homer's Hades to the unfathomable *psuchê* of Heraclitus.

It is a pity that Plato who gave metaphysical profundity and moral richness to the *psuchê* of Heraclitus went on to commingle it with the idea of a separate and separable soul which he probably borrowed from the mystery religions. This Platonic hybrid was inherited by Christianity. In the older books of the Hebrew Bible there is no soul and no personal immortality. I believe that the origin of references to personal immortality in the New Testament is a knotty and debatable question. All the arguments for immortality in the *Phaedo* are confessedly inconclusive. After the 'final argument' (the poorest in my opinion) Socrates says that "...our first assumptions ought to be more carefully examined ..." (107b, tr. Fowler). In the *Apology* Socrates' position is definitely agnostic.

But what need have we to go into the pros and cons of personal immortality? For any pure morality that question should be absolutely irrelevant. Any morality that seeks justification in hopes of reward or fears of punishment is

abjectly servile. It annuls the worth, the very meaning, of humanity and completely undermines moral freedom.

II

Let us turn to the more meaningful question: What can a person who lives a moral life look forward to in the actual world we live in?

In this world and particularly in our human world there is no guarantee and no certainty. Thomas Hardly has it right:

"...How arrives it joy lies slain,
"And why unblooms the best hope ever sown?
"—Crass Casualty obstructs the sun and rain,
"And dicing Time for gladness casts a moan.
"These purblind Doomsters had as readily strown
"Blisses about my pilgrimage as pain."

(Thomas Hardy, "Hap")

Leaving aside heart-rending tragedies and disastrous calamities, a relatively happy life is strewn with pain, grief, sorrow and frustration.

In our sickly societies, even, or rather especially, in the advanced countries, women and men are in the fevered grip

of competitiveness and consumerism. An individual who is willing and ready to live contentedly and peacefully still cannot escape the stress and strain. If nothing else, she or he is grieved and pained by the discord and strife around them even among their nearest and dearest ones.

One could go on declaiming endlessly on the miseries of our modern societies, but there is no need, for these are commonplaces and banalities. So what can a sane person hope for?

Do I really have to answer this question? The way to a good life has been time and again shown plainly and in the simplest of words by wise teachers. Even in our own day there is no dearth of wisdom. The trouble is that we are too sophisticated to take seriously the naïve words of a Socrates, an Epictetus, a Confucius, a Jesus, a Gandhi, a Schweitzer. These have worded their messages differently but in essence have all been saying the same thing. If you take seriously any of their words that one word will lead you to all the others. Shelley's Prometheus says: "I wish no living thing to suffer pain". Those eight simple words are a sufficient guide for a good life. But we are too clever to take that seriously or to take seriously the words of Socrates: "To suffer harm is a lesser evil than to commit harm" or the wotds of Jesus "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you".

The best a reasonable person can hope for is to have a quiet life, to live in peace with all; to enjoy the simple pure joys of life; to love and to forgive; to bear stoically what suffering comes her or his way. (I jumble my phrases haphazardly; you can replace them with whatever you will.)

My reward will be the greatest boon for a human being: to preserve the health and integrity of my most precious treasure, my innermost reality. What else can I ask for? With that preserved pure and wholesome I can die contentedly, saying with Hölderlin "Is it not enough to have travelled *once* through mortality?" (Hölderlin, *Hyperion*)

D. R. Khashaba

February 8. 2021

READINGS IN SPINOZA I

PREFACE

As a thinker, Spinoza harms himself. You read Plato's *Phaedo* a hundred times and you feel you will still find in it new inspiration. You read Spinoza's *Ethics* once and you feel you don't have to go to it again. It is all so clear, so complete. But this is a deceptive feeling. The work of an original thinker can never be exhausted. In this series of "Readings in Spinoza" I hope to be exploring some of the hidden riches of Spinoza's thought.

TREATISE ON

THE EMENDATION OF THE INTELLECT

Spinoza's unfinished *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellrct* is instructive in more than one way. It shows the first roots of Spinoza's mature philosophy. Again, I find his having left his first philosophical work unfinished highly significant. [All quotations are from Samuel Shirley's translation.]

THE GOOD

The Treatise begins as an autobiographical account and from the first few lines we see that what he sought was something that "would afford me a continuous and supreme joy to all eternity". That clearly points to the mystic call, the metaphysical allure, that divine madness that captivates the genuinely philosophical soul. He saw that all happiness "depends solely on the quality of the object to wh ich we are bound by love".

Spinoza states explicitly that his purpose "is to direct all the sciences to one end and goal: ... the achievement of the highest human perfection". To attain that goal Spinoza sought "the knowledge of the union which the mind has

with the whole of Nature". Here I think I detect the reason why he left the Treatise unfinished. He must have seen that, as first projected, it did not give him scope for an adequate consideration of the "true good" and the "supreme good".

SELF-EVIDENCE OF IDEAS

Spinoza surveys all the "modes of perceiving" employed in affirming or denying: (1) Perception from hearsay. (2) Perception from casual experience, not determined by intellect. (3) Perception of the essence of a thing inferred from another thing, but not adequately. 4) "Finally, there is the perception we have when a thing is perceived through its essence alone, or through knowledge of its proximate cause." After illustrating the first three modes by examples, Spinoza says of the fourth:

> **"Finally, a thing is perceived through its essence alone when, from the fact that I know something, I know what it is to know something ... By the same kind of knowledge we know that two and three are five, and that if two lines are parallel to a third line, they are parallel to one another, and so on."**

This, to my mind, points to the self-evidence of immediate subjective awareness. I thought Spinoza rightly attaches much importance to this passage. He explains it at great length with illustrations from number and geometry.

Spinoza thus seems to raise and discuss a most important ontological and epistemological problem but I am afraid his explication is, if not confused, at any rate confusing (and I cannot judge how much of that may be due to the translation). The problem in question is that of the self-evidence of ideas, the profoundest presentation of which I find in Plato and which, I believe, modern philosophers and scholars have not yet fully grasped. I shall be quoting extracts from Spinoza's text followed by my comments. I must explain that my intention is not critical or exegetical but philosophical. My aim is not to ascertain what Spinoza thought or said but to consider the problem philosophically along with Spinoza.

First let me briefly state the Platonic position according to my understanding. Socrates in the *Phaedo* rejects the view that two is explained by the addition of one to one and the view that ten exceeds eight by two. Two or ten is an intelligible form and that alone is the whole meaning of two or ten. Socrates in his critical examinations shows the insufficiency of extraneous definitions or explanations of any idea. The meaning of justive or courage or piety is to be sought in the self-evidence of the idea in the mind.

"A true idea ... is something different from its object (ideatum). A circle is one thing, the idea of a circle another. ... And since it is something different from its object, it will also be something intelligible through itself. That is, in respect of its formal essence the idea can be the object of another objective essence, which in turn, regarded in itself, will also be something real and intelligible, and so on indefinitely."

I am not certain I understand Spinoza correctly. I do not feel easy about the use of the terms 'object' and 'objective', again 'essence' in Spinoza has one foot in logic and the other in metaphysics: but when Spinoza says that "the idea can be the object of another objective essence" I suspect that is akin to what I have said elsewhere about second-tier and third-tier conceptual systems. But again I feel uncertain when I read:

"Peter is something real. Now the true idea of Peter is the objective essence of Peter and is in itself something real, something entirely different from Peter. So since the idea of Peter is something real, having its own individual essence, it will also be something intelligible, that is, the object of another idea which has in itself objectively everything that the idea of Peter has formally. And in turn the idea of the idea of Peter again has its own essence, which can also be the object of an-

other idea, and so on without end. This anyone can experience for himself when he realises that he knows what Peter is, and also that he knows that he knows, and again that he knows that he knows that he knows, and so on."

There seems to be a textual muddle here. The fault may be in the digital version I am using. I am sorry I do not now have the means to check that. What makes me suspect some error is that this statement is contradicted by what follows where we read:

"From this it is evident that, to understand the essence of Peter, it is not necessary to understand the idea of Peter, and far less the idea of Peter. This is no more than to say that, in order to know, I need not know that I know, and far less do I need to know that I know that I know."

In my first reading it was this passage that struck me as affirming the immediacy of the self-evidence of ideas (at whatever level). The self-evidence of ideas does away with the Third Man fallacy, with the need for Russell's Theory of Types and with the meta-meta-meta fabrications of Analytic philosophers.. Understanding is its own luminosity, its own testimomy, its own evidence. The mind is a living fount of light and needs no light to give it light.

Here Spinoza dilates at considerable length about method: he seems to have been arguing against certain opposed views. Indeed the tone of the whole discussion is angry and impatient. Then at a certain point he says:

> **"Furthermore, from the point just mentioned - that the idea must entirely agree with its formal essence - it is again evident that, for the human mind to reproduce a faithful image of Nature, it must draw all its ideas from that idea which represents the source and origin of the whole of Nature, so that this may likewise become the source of other ideas."**

I take this to show that no meaningful epistemology can stand apart from a comprehensive metaphysical vision. This would confirm what I said in my introductory remarks to the effect that Spinoza may have left the Treatise unfinished when he saw that its scope did not help him do justice to his original aim.

I don't have any worthwhile comments to make on the rest of the Treatise. What Spinoza says about 'complete definition' is merely formal. Spinoza speaks about knowledge of 'eternal things'. Are mathematical 'truths' among eternal things? To my mind, all 'mathematical knowledge' is a creation of the human mind.

Next I will take up the *Short Treatise on God, Man, and his Well-Being*. Frankly, I am not happy about the present paper and hope the examination of the *Short Treatise* will be more fruitful.

D. R. Khashaba
February 11, 2021

APOLOGY

I have to apologize to the Reader for I have to drop the "Readings in Spinoza" as a bad idea. The rationalist craze, the penchant for proving everything, is Descartes's poisoned gift to philosophy.

Words are treacherous. Verbal arguments are treacherous. When one has adopted a certain position one can always find plausible arguments for it.

For a while I had thought that had Spinoza developed and completed the *Short Treatise on God, Man, and his Well-Being* that would have spared him the inanity of the 'geometrical demonstrations' in the *Ethics*. I was dismayed to find that when Spinoza wrote the *Short Treatise* he was still in the clutches of the Cartesian folly. The First Book is an extended argument for the existence of God. Waiving for now my terminological objection to ascribing 'existence' to God, I simply cannot see how one who takes God to be the All, the Whole, the only Substance, has need to prove the 'existence' (reality) of God. If we are permitted

at all to speak of the All, then to argue that the All exists would be as silly as to argue that I exist. Parmenides does not argue for the existence of the One. Plato is even wiser: he not only does not argue for the existence of the Form of the Good but refuses to affirm anything of the Form of the Good. I suppose that when Spinoza came to write the *Ethics* he had already seen the absurdity of any 'proof' of the 'existence' (reality) of God: a handful of axioms and definitions were all the foundation he needed for erecting his majestic edifice.

In the *Phaedo* Socrates warns against misology. That has to be understood properly. Reason can only work within a particularized context. It brings in consistency and harmony within the given context but cannot validate the given content of the context. That is why Plato in the *Republic* insists that dialectic must constantly destroy the presuppositions of any philosophical position. This goes for all theoretical knowledge including the best-founded of empirical science. We are deceived when we think that mathematics and logic show otherwise: for mathematics and logic are artificial closed systems: their pure formulations are empty; their applied statements are contingent and provisional. The Socratic admonition practically means that we always have to examine and re-examine the

foundations of our thought. This is rationality as distinct from rationalism.

Apart from my disappointment with the *Short Treatise* I found that, with my eyesight nearly completely gone, citing particular passages to comment on has become an unbearable torture. I listen to the text by means of the 'Read Out Loud' facility on Adobe Acrobat Reader, but to quote a passage or even a single sentence I have to copy the text, which is a forbidding torment. I have to go back to the resolve I had formed months ago, no more to write anytging but spontaneous reflections. Typing on the keyboard then checking and correcting typos is enough yrouble.

I ask the Reader's forgiveness.

D. R. Khashaba

February 12. 2021

GOODBYE TO PHILOSOPHY

I am resolved to say a final Goodbye to philosophy — not to philosophizing, for to live intelligently is necessarily to philosophize.

To philosophize in the sense of living intelligently is to constantly subject our aims, values, ideals, dreams, to the searchlight of the mind.

A member of the human race cannot be truly human unless she or he live intelligently.

A human being cannot be whole and harmonious within until she or he lives in harmony and unity with those around them and with all that surrounds them.

Hölderlin in the beautiful little poem "*Da ich ein Knabe war*" pictures the harmony and unity of the child

with Nature before the pressures and deceptions of common lfe dim or obliterate that harmony and unity.

Love is the guide to regaining our lost harmony and unity with all Life and all Nature.

That is all the wisdom needed for a wholesome human life.

Many humble, simple individuals in all parts of the world, even without intellectual exertion, are blessed with that wisdom and live in peace within and without, no matter what fortune or misfortune they meet with.

But a few of us are afflicted with puzzlement about the ultimate mysteries of Life and of Being. The yearning for "something afar from the sphere of our sorrow" fills them with a painful restlessness but they feel it gives breadth and depth, wholeness and harmony to their innermost being. These cannot but philosophize.

Lao Tzu and the ancient sages of India philosophized truly and so did the Greeks until Aristotle replaced reason with reasoning.

I philosophized truly in my boyhood. But sooner than was good for me I knew something about philosophy and philosophers. For a time I was under the common delusion

of expecting reasoning to resolve the ultimate mysteries of Life and Being. How poor that would have made our world!

Even Plato wavered and went astray at times but in his best inspired moments he saw clearly that in wrestling with ultimate mysteries we form visions that lend our life meaning and wholeness that in turn give our innermost reality meaning and wholeness but which can never be constricted in any definitive formulations of thought or language but can only be intimated in myth and parable.

That great insight escaped later philosophers; but poets did not have to learn it from Plato. It is the quintessence of poetic genius.

How do I translate my resolve to say goodbye to philosophy? Other than Plato I will approach no works of philosophy. I will read poetry, fiction, history, etc. Recently I read Aldous Huxley's collected essays. They are generally enlightening and often inspiring. This is good philosophy in the wider sense of the term.

The pity is that the electronic 'reading' device I use, though it may be, despite defects and faults, fairly good for reading general material, is extremely unfit for reading poetry. I will try to compensate by listening to more music

where the poorness of my hearing does not introduce such distortion as I can detect.

D. R. Khashaba

February 15, 2021

PS: To reassure the kind Visitors to this blog, let me explain that this does not mean I will no more write philosophy but only that I will not discuss any philosophical works or philosophical theories.

METAPHYSICS OF FREEDOM

PREACE

In my latest posting I affirmed my resolve no longer to discuss any philosophical works or philosophical theories. I am not going back on that resolve: indeed I no longer have what it takes to 'do philosophy' in the traditional manner. Hume in his last days, in full intellectual vigour but bodily debilitated by diarrhea, busied himself with revising his general essays. Thus, in justice to myself and in deference to the truth in the only philosophically viable sense of the tern, I have to highlight and clarify my principal contribution or one wing of my principal contribution to philosophical thinking.

I

THE PARADOX OF FREEDOM

In the long-drawn controversy about free will advocates of both sides were hampered by remaining within the natural realm. Within the natural realm human action is necessarily conditioned by antecedents but is not determined thereby, since the antecedents include character, acquired principles, ideals, values, and past experiences. Thus action, while conditioned by such antecedents, is autonomous and thus free in a meaningful sense of freedom. Hence both contestants in the free will controversy are shackled by championing a half-truth.

METAPHYSICAL FREEDOM

True freedom is only possible where the natural realm is transcended in the creativity of metaphysical reality.

In the activity of intelligent beings there is true creative freedom in the spontaneity of love, in self-sacrifice, in the preservation of the purity and integrity of one's soul in a martyr's death. There is also metaphysical freedom in the creations of the poet, the artist, the philosopher. Glory be to the poets; they alone understand this.

Freedom in human creativity is grounded in the metaphysical creativity of all reality.

As human action is conditioned but not determined by antecedents, so all change and all becoming in the natural realm is only intelligible under the ultimate metaphysical principle of creativity. All natural process 'saves' the ground whence it springs while it renews and innovates. The solid mountain no less than the gaseous nebula is a sonata wherein the unity of the theme is played out in new formations and modulations.

qLet the scientists keep the fiction of causal necessity as a practical tool that well serves their specific purposes. But I cannot see the world as intelligible except as an outflow of Creative Eternity.

II

PHILOSOPHY AS VUSION

I hinted above that my purpose in this paper was to highlight and clarify one wing of what I see as my special contribution to philosophical thinking. Rather than leaving the implied allusion to another wing as an enigma, I will say a few words in explanation.

I speak of nature and of finding the world intelligible. In saying this I do not intend to claim any knowledge outside my subjectivity. Of the world outside our mind we know nothing. By experience and by science (which is nothing but sophisticated experience) we are acquainted with happenings and regularities outside our own inner being. This acquaintance, naïve and sophisticated, is of vital practical importance. All of our daily life and all of human civilization hang on it. But to think that we know the essence or the beginning or end of anything outside our subjective reality is compounded ignorance.

But we have puzzlements about those extraneous mysteries and we have yearnings for we-now-not-what and we have absolutely no way of fathoming the mysteries or of affording final satisfaction to the yearnings. To appease our puzzlements and our yearnings we invent myths and fables and have been inventing myths and fables from the dawn of humanity. Our myths and fables enrich our subjective being and give us our spiritual plane of being.

For about two-and-a-half millennia philosophers thought that by pure reasoning they can achieve objective knowledge like that of science or formal certainty like that of mathematics. That was a treacherous illusion. Only a

few pre-Aristotelian philosophers, chiefly Plato, understood that the myths and fables are visions having their own intrinsic value and that only these were the true gift of philosophy and were the whole of philosophy. Since Aristotle this insight has been the monopoly of the poets.

Thus the two wings of what I venture to call my original contribution to philosophy are these: that philosophy is the creation of a vision and that in my vision of Creative Eternity the essence of ultimate Reality is Creativity and Creativity is the whole of Reality. And I reiterate: I do not say that such is the world but that such is the only way I can find the world intelligible.

D. R. Khashaba

February 17, 2021

THE GOOD

Kant says the only absolutely good thing is a good will.

Kant is right; Kant is wrong.

Oddly it was Hobbes who got it right: There is no Will but only willing.

Will is not a faculty or a power like the power of reasoning or of imagination.

Will properly speaking is other than desire.

Desire is a drive towards something we see as good.

An object of desire that may be seen as good can only be good relatively, contingently, conditionally.

Will is a yearning for The Good.

The Good is perfection. When inspired by the Idea of the Good we are one with the All.

A new-born baby is seen by others to be in the world but to itself it is the world.

The baby's subjectivity encompasses its world and there is no world other than its world.

In its subjective reality it is one with the All.

In its first awareness of distinction within the All – its awareness of Mother and Mother's breast – is not awareness of another: Mother and Baby are one in the baby's subjective reality.

Gradually objects begin to be separated in the child's awareness and with the separation of objects begins the fragmentation of the person.

Originally the person is the All and enjoys the integrity of the All.

The fragmentation is always gradual and always more or less partial.

In its first contact with other children the child and its comrades are one in the child's subjective reality.

With the fragmentation of human society the fragmentation of the person deepens and solidifies.

A fortunate person grows up in a loving caring milieu and suffers but limited fragmentation.

An unfortunate person, impregnated with the negativities of fragmented society, is most fragmented.

Every generous impulse, every flicker of pity or compassion, takes us momentarily back to to unity with the All, the unity we enjoyed when we were not in the world but were to ourselves the world.

All virtue is a breaking down of fragmentation and a taste of unity with the All.

In Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* the mariner watching the sea-snakes says:

> **O happy living things! No tongue**
>
> **Their beauty might declare:**
>
> **A spring of love gush'd from my heart,**
>
> **And I bless'd them unaware.**

The vision of beauty outflows in the blessing and sets the mab free from cell in which he had incarcerated himself when he killed the albatross.

Shelley's Prometheus rescinds the curse he had cast on Zeus (Jupiter) and says "I wish no living thing to suffer pain". That freed him — and the Demogorgon, incarnate negativity, annihilated the negativity that was Zeus.

All that unites us with other is good, all that separates us from another is evil. This is the sum-total of morals.

These thoughts were triggered by a beautiful and profoundly insightful passage in George Eliot' *Middlemarch*:

> **"... by desiring what is perfectly good, even when we don't quite know what it is and cannot do what we would, we are part of the divine power against evil — widening the skirts of light and making the struggle with darkness narrower."**

D. R. Khashaba
February 22, 2021

THE HUMAN TRAGEDY

I would be very sorry if what I have been writing on love and virtue and the good life is taken to mean that I think all that is easy to achieve. It should be but it is not. No moral teacher was under the illusion that it is easy to make all people see where their true good, the only true good, is and to live accordingly. That indeed is the paradox of Socrates that the learned find it difficult to understand. They think Socrates is a simpleton and speaks nonsense when he says that one who knows the good will be good. To know the good is not, for Socrates, to have a certain doctrine or belief brain-fed into one's consciousness. To know the good is to have experienced the bliss of doing good and being good and to have seen that in doing good and being good one's inner reality is at its best, richest, and fullest.

In our actual world which has strayed far away from the state of innocence and purity this spiritual perfection is rare but is neither impossible nor unknown. I am convinced that many simple persons in simple circumstances have spent their life loving, caring, forgiving, sacrificing and have enjoyed inner peace though their worldly fortunes may have been dire. These are those that the Sermon on the Mount in its best parts calls the meek and the poor in spirit.

But even within the life of present-day societies, maddened with greed, rivalry, competitiveness, and consumerism a physician devoted to fighting pain and disease, a scientist devoted to research, an artist or a writer devoted to diffusing ideals and values, can live in peace with themselves and with those around them.

The ideal of a saintly humanity, a humanity composed chiefly of wise and virtuous humans, may seem to be unattainable. But I believe we can reasonably make two affirmations. (1) For humanity as a whole, to escape impending doom, all humans on our plant must be organized as one family under a sane system of government free from the ills of greed, competitiveness, and consumerism. (2) For individuals, whether in a reformed society or in the pre-

sent corrupt society, a good life is only possible in suvh measure as they approach the ideal of the highest moral good.

Alas! Even under the best of circumstances and among intelligent, decent, good-natured women and men, the complexities of human relations and the intricacies of the psychic constitution of individuals leave room for misunderstandings, clashes of aims, purposes, and viewpoints, breeding pangs and qualms and grief. Again, it is in the measure in which we earnestly seek to uphold the ideal of the Good that we may have peace within and without.

Hopefully the above lines may clarify my position on the good life and may they also be my apology to friends who found my views on the prospects of humankind over-pessimistic.

D. R. Khashaba

February 23, 2021

A CREATION MYTH

Dear Reader,

Please don't take the following whimsical lines too seriously nor judge them too harshly. They are not nonsense neither are they divinely inspired. Like all oracles they yield not what is in them but what they that receive them put into them.

This is a cry of pain emitted under the crushing pressure of bafflement at the inescapability of human misery. If it is taken as evidence of mental derangement that will perhaps be the most benign interpretation.

*****

Creative Eternity is pure subjectivity.

It is serene bliss, Nirvana, the quintessence of Reality.

Ir is Creative Intelligence. It is intelligent Creativity.

*

Creative Eternity outflows in Existence.

Existence is perpetual becoming, perpetual vanishing, sheer transience.

*

Existence breeds the other, the object.

All object is in union with subject.

The object breeds the individual.

The individual breeds the existent living.

*

The existent living is in union with subject.

Existent living breeds existent awareness, consciousness.

*

Existent awareness, consciousness, breeds objective thought.

Objective thought breeds the concept.

*

The concept breeds bare otherness.

Bare otherness breeds alienation.

Alienation breeds negativity.

*****

Negativity breds all evil.

*****

All that an unsullied soul can do is to be intent on fighting evil.

D. R. Khashaba

February 25, 2021

METAPHYSICS OF WISDOM

On moral, philosophical, and metaphysical grounds I believe that we need to assign to the word 'wisdom' a special meaning radically distinct from 'intelligence', 'knowledge', 'learning', and kindred terms, but fundamentally related to 'understanding'. My approach is not linguistic or epistemic but metaphysical. My purpose is not to determine the 'correct' usage of the term but to introduce a metaphysical principle to enrich the spiritual plane of human life.

It is a basic tenet of my philosophy that understanding is never imported into the mind from outside the mind: understanding is a power, a creative power that brings forth intelligible forms that lend meaning and significance to the bare data of experience. To understand the simplest utterance in daily converse is to interpret it in forms stemming from the total personality of the recipient. I speak of understanding since it offers an analogy that is profoundly and absolutely true of wisdom.

Wisdom is a state of the mind, a fount of light and of goodwill that infuses all it shines upon with beauty and goodness. To spare myself much headache I could have chosen to speak of nirvana for that indeed is the essence of wisdom. But that would have defeated my purpose: for what I have in mind is not exceptional wisdom but the wisdom of the meek and the pure of heart whether their intellectual powers and other capacities be humble or exalted.

To say that wisdom is a state of the mind is to say that it is an inborn experience, an immediate awareness of the essence of our core reality as affirmation of being and outflow of goodwill.

That blissful wisdom is our birthright. The glee in a baby's giggle is an acknowledgment of the bliss of life. That is the gladness Sgelley finds in the singing of the skylark when he addresses the happy bird saying: "Teach me half the gladness / That thy brain must know". That pure, simple, unperturbed awareness of beauty and outflowing goodwill as the essence of life is the serene fount of love that fills the heart of the saintly, the humble, the pure of heart. All over humanity a few women and men enjoy throughout their life that natural goodness: these are to be found in the humblest stations and in the privileged ranks

of society. These are truly wise since they have immediate awareness of what is truly good in life. They live at peace with themselves and with all who and with all that surrounds them since they have their treasure within themselves.

That I say is our birthright but the contingences of human life, especially under the complications and corruptions of civilization, soon begin to soil and clutter our inward core. The rare meek and pure of heart need neither moral code nor philosophical enlightenment, but we, the less fortunate ones, need to obey the Socratic injunction, constantly to scrutinize our aims, our values, our inherited beliefs and prejudices.

Plato in the *Phaedo* sets apart, in a few lines, the false values and the true values and finds that true values, the gift of wisdom, are essentially cleansing and purification. I was tempted to quote the passage at some length, but let the following few words suffice:

> **"... τὸ δ᾽ ἀληθὲς τῷ ὄντι ᾖ κάθαρσίς τις τῶν τοιούτων πάντων καὶ ἡ σωφροσύνη καὶ ἡ δικαιοσύνη καὶ ἀνδρεία, καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ φρόνησις μὴ καθαρμός τις ᾖ."**

“... - in truth, moderation and courage and justice are a purging away of all such things, and wisdom itself is a kind of cleansing or purification´69c, tr. Grube).

It is not only the patently bad ones that are in need of the Socratic scrutiny: we are all in need of ceaseless, persistent cleansing and purification. And as on the theoretical plane more stupidities have been propagated by the learned than by the simply ignorant, so on the moral plane more harm has been wreaked by the religious than by tyrants and common criminals. I am referring mot to the fanatic rabble but to lrarned, revered, and sanctified individuals and institutions. I need not go into detail.

To sum up and conclude on a more hopeful note: All wisdom and all virtue reside in preserving or regaining the pristine purity and simplicity of our inner core. This is avowed by the Socratic insight that our only good is a healthy soul, by the Kantian insight that the only absolutely good thing is a good will.

D. R. Khashaba

Maech 3, 2021

WHERE IS THE SOUL?

Let me begin by confessing that the question at the top of this paper is only a byway to a more fundamental problem which may be lamely worded as "the place of metaphysical reality". Since I am in a confessional mood, here is another confession: this paper is itself is substantially only am excuse for the message lodged in the PS. Enough of riddles.

Plotinus wisely says:

> **"How comes it ... that everyone speaks of soul as being in body? Because the soul is not seen and the body is: we perceive the body, and by its movement and sensation we understand that it is ensouled, and we say that it possesses a soul; to speak of residence is a natural sequence. If the soul were visible, an object of the senses, radiating throughout the entire life, if it were manifest in full force to the very outermost surface, we would no longer speak of soul as in body; we would**

say the minor was within the major, the contained within the container, the fleeting within the perdurable." Ennead 4, Tractate 3, Chapter 20)

But to speak of the soul as containing the body is no less a metaphor than to say that the soul is in the body, though the grosser metaphor made Descartes commit the idiocy of housing the soul in the pineal gland.

The soul is beyond and above all Where, but our language-ridden and concept-ridden mentality finds that difficult to absorb. Thus our Empiricist scientists and professors of philosophy turned scientists assert that since the mind (they are too dignified to speak of soul) being nowhere is non-existent — and in saying this their speech hides truth far beyond their comprehension.

The soul, the mind, is the unity, the integrity, the wholeness that makes the person a person. It is nowhere, but without it the whole is not a whole but a jumble of bits and pieces (which in turn have their particular unities, else they are not).

This is true of all ideal, all spiritual, reality. Since our body-bound mentality can only grasp the embodied, let me give an exemplification: The letters (f g l e d h u t l I) are a meaningless spread of letters: Re-arranged as 'delightful' they are a meaningful word. Where is the word, the mean-

ing? The word is the unity, the form, that metamorphoses the letters into a word. The meaning of the word is nowhere: it is the wholeness, the integrity, that makes of the meaningless letters a meaningful whole that we call a word.

That is true of all spiritual reality, all metaphysical reality: it is nowhere, it is above and beyond the Where,: it is what gives the real its reality.

"The mind is its own place", says Milton — not 'is in its own place' but 'is its own place' for it has no place. Only the finite and the particular is in place and in the stream of becoming and hence is transient, ever vanishing.

D. R. Khashaba
March 8, 2021

<u>PS</u>: I was musing howto convey to Visitors of my blog that I will soon, very soon, be forced finally to give up writing. I am presently working on a lengthy piece summing up the whole of ,y philosophy. That will form the concluding part of a collection of my latest writings that I I hope to upload within a few weeks. Hence it is unlikely that I will make any postings for a while. I will naturally give a link to the pdf here and elsewhere. Thereafter if I post anything (a highly dubious if), it will be cursory notes or reflections.

WAS PLATO INCONSISTENT?

In Book VI of the *Republic* 'Socrates' having repeatedly mentioned the highest study (or highest knowledge) and having been repeatedly asked what that highest knowledge is, says that the idea of the good is the highest knowledge. When asked to give an account of the idea of the good he says he cannot give an account of the idea of the good but can only offer an analogy.

We are clearly given to understand that no account can be given of the idea of the good, or of the Good, for while the Good is "not only the author of knowledge to all things known, but of their being and essence" yet it "far exceeds essence in dignity and power" (tr. Jowett).

Nevertheless, when further on 'Socrates' is discussing the studies that the guardians of the ideal city have to go through, we are told that "they must continue to ascend until they arrive at the good" (tr. Jowett).

Do we detect an inconsistency here? How can anyone arrive at the study of the Good when the Good is far above and beyond all knowledge and all being?

To understand Plato, whose metaphysical insight soars beyomd the sphere of finitude and limitations, we have to transcend logic and reason, which are tools formed within and adapted to the sphere of finitude and limitations. A contradiction in Plato is a signal directing us to a deeper meaning.

o arrive at the Good is not to acquire knowledge that can be articulated in any structures of thought or language: it is to arrive at a power, an aptitude, the power and aptitude of the wholesome Soul that is the spring and fount of all meaning and meaningfulness and intelligibility.

Genuine philosophical insight is of the nature of mystic experience. Philosophers have strayed far and wide when they took upon themselves the constraints of mathematical thinking and of empirical science.

D. R. Khashaba

March 13, 2021

THE BAD LEGACY OF DESCARTES

Say what you will of me, I will never desist from maintaining that, next to Aristotle, no one did so much harm to philosophy as Descartes. I readily assent to the general consensus that both men were great thinkers. They couldn't have done so much harm had they not been astute thinkers.

Descartes was a prominent mathematician and confounded philosophy with mathematics — a fault that Plato only escaped by dint of the amplitude of his genius and of his mystic insights.

Descartes rode the wave of the Renaissance revolt against the narrowness of Scholasticism, but the revolt under the influence of Descartes, while shedding off the Scholastic slavish dogmatic adherence to Aristotle, confirmed and solidified the other grave fault of the Scholastics,

namely, their blind rationalistic approach and methodology.

So pervasive was the influence of Descartes's corrupt rationalistic approach to philosophy that even such great minds as Leibniz and Spinoza were swayed by it. This miserable trend in European thinking culminated – despite the warning cries of Kant – in the Hegelian dream towers aspiring to reach and usurp the Seat of the Divine.

But Descartes was also equally, though negatively, responsible for the other deleterious delusion of modern philosophy. For Empiricists, perceiving the absurdity of vacuous rationalistic deductions, dumped reason altogether and claimed to reach valuable scientific knowledge by and through experience alone, not seeing that the simplest sensuous impression cannot be experienced without an injection of thought. Locke and Hume, to be reasonable, had to be inconsistent. Berkeley, to be reasonable, had to transmute the Empiricism he received from Locke into an Idealism after his own heart.

Reason all by itself is empty (logic and mathematics). Reason married to experience is worldly-wise and gives us our material civilization, replete with as much, rather with more, evil good. Above and beyond sheer reason, insightful

creative intelligence gives us our spiritual heritage of moral values, poetry, and art.

D. R. Khashaba

March 18, 2021

PART TWO

GOSPEL OF CREATIVE ETERNITY

GOSPEL
OF
CREATIVE ETERNITY

ORACLES OF
THE UNNAMED PROPHET

Edited by David Wood

“The best of gifts come to us through madness, divine madness.”

Plato, *Phaedrus*, 244a.

Editor's Foreword

The following dicta were collected from the notes of the eight followers of the Unnamed Prophet. The Prophet's followers did not give him a common name but referred to him by various holy designations.

I have arranged the oracles in five sections, prefacing each section with a note. But there is no pretense of intended order in the arrangement of the sayings. These may be read in any order and it will be found that as earlier dicta throw light on later ones, the later ones disclose hidden meaning in the earlier, for the thought of the Prophet is a highly integrated whole.

DW

I

The notes collected in this section appear to have formed the backbone of the Prophet's teaching.

DW

1

In the beginning was Creativity and Creativity was with Eternity and Creativity was Eternity.

2

From Creative Eternity came forth the World.

3

With the World came forth three Principles: Intelligibility and Integrity and Transience.

4

Intelligibility gave the world luminosity. Integrity gave the world wholeness. Transience gave the world evanescent continuity.

5

With the world was Life and the World was Life.

6

With Life was Intelligence and life was intelligence.

7

Intelligence and Integrity are the essence of the Soul.

8

With the Soul was Love and the Soul was Love and the Soul and Love outflow in wisdom and virtue.

9

With Wisdom and Virtue the Soul gave the word Meaning and Beauty.

II

The notes collected in this section are recorded by all or nearly all of the eight followers.

DW

10

You do not see Meaning with your mind; you do not see Beauty with your eye: your pure luminous Soul sheds meaning and beauty on the world.

11

Apprehend that, you that search for understanding and for bliss. Beyond that there is no understanding and there is no bliss.

12

In the world you will suffer and you will grieve but if your Soul be overflowing with Love you will remain at Peace.

13

To be is to be good.

Only the Good is real, only the Good is fully real.

14

Perfection is death. God is not perfect. God is not.

In not being, God creates being.

15

To have is to be closed, to be stagnant. To give is to overflow, to be alive, to be free.

16

Good it is to spread the message of love: far better it is to be yourself a message of love.

17

Virtue even in defeat is victorious, affirming the purity and integrity of its essence.

18

Vice even in victory shows its nullity for its essence is negativity.

19

Do not be deceived by them that say the Eternal is passive. The Eternal is Creativity. The Eternal is the fount of all Life, all Love, all Joy.

20

All Reality is within you.

21

Disdain not your Emptiness, your Nothingness. Your Emptiness, your Nothingness is hunger and thirst for the Perfect.

22

Your Hunger and Thirst for Perfection is your Way to your inner Reality. That is all Reality. All Reality is that.

23

You are not body and soul. You are Soul, pure Soul. Your body is the shadow of your Soul. All body is the shadow of Soul.

24

Beware of losing the Way in the byways of knowledge. The more you are entangled in the byways of knowledge the farther away you are from Wisdom.

25

Evil is alienation from your inner Reality. Evil is fragmentation of your Wholeness.

26

All desire, all appetite is affirmation of being. All affirmation of being is good. Yet desire of the partial and the transient and affirmation of the partial and the transient is attachment to shadow. Attachment to shadows is alienation from Reality. All alienation from Reality is evil.

27

In the finitude of your being you yearn for perfection in the All. In the Wholeness of your Being you live the perfection of the All.

28

Your person is presence of Creative Eternity in finitude and transience. Your Soul is the wholeness of your person.

29

Your Soul is a gush of Creative Eternity. Your Soul as Creative Eternity outflows in beauty, intelligence, and reality.

30

Th wholesome Soul as presence of Creative Eternity brings forth beauty, intelligence, reality. That is the spiritual life. The spiritual life is the peace and bliss of nirvana.

31

As part of the transient world we suffer pain, grief, and death. As alienated from the Wholeness of the Soul we commit and undergo wrongdoing. These are eventualities of the shadow world.

32

All virtue is outflow of our inner goodness. Our inner goodness is our inner Reality.

33

Beauty is the Light of the Soul reflected in outer form.

34

You receive nothing from the outer world but neutral signals. All the meaning you find in them is conferred on them by your creative intelligence.

35

Our inner Reality is inexpressible, ineffable. We can only express our inner Reality in creations of beauty, intelligence, goodness. All expression of our inner Reality is myth and allegory.

36

We ourselves are all the Reality we know. Beyond our being there is only our own ideal of the Reality of which we sense our reality to be a presence in finitude and transience. Beyond that we must confess our ignorance.

37

All illusion of knowledge is folly. We are wise in such measure as we confess our ignorance.

38

In the spiritual realm Goodness, Joy, Bliss are of one essence. In the world of shadows goodness and happiness rarely go hand in hand.

39

Let the Beauty of your Soul shine. Cleanse yourself of attachment to shadows. Heal the fragmentation of your person. Your innermost reality is divine Reality.

40

To live in the body is to live in the shadow world, to be subject to all the negativities of the world of shadows.

41

Evil in human life is remoteness from the pure Soul. Evil in human life arises from fragmentation of the wholeness of the person.

42

In the natural world, though it be shadow and nothing but shadow, there is no evil. In the natural world, the shadow world, there is pain, there is suffering, there is death. Pain and suffering and death are not evil. Pain, suffering, and death are inherent in the transience of the shadow world. There is evil only in the alienation of the finite human intellect from the purity of the Soul, in the fragmentation of the human person.

43

The learned speak of generation and corruption. The evanescence of the generated is not corruption. It is fulfilment.

44

The flower withering does not complain. Its blooming and its withering are a single creative act.

45

The bird warbling does not regret the ending of its song. The bird's song is an outflow of inner joy and ends as it began in joy.

46

Be a creator of beauty, of intelligence, of good. That is your tasting of Eternity, that is your living in Eternity while sojourning in the world of shadows.

47

In creativity you enjoy momentary Eternity. Your finite being can only enjoy Eternity in vanishing.

III

The following sayings were recorded in the notes of five of the eight followers of the Prophet.

DW

48

You speak of the World Soul. That is a fine fancy. It teaches you to reverence all life and all form as living in the World Soul. But beware of thinking that you know anything of the outer world. That error will lead you to grosser error. Forget not the imperative of confessing ignorance.

49

We are not given to know the world we live in. That to us is a shadow world. Suffice it for us to know the world that lives in us. That is the real world for us.

50

Beware of the deception of shadow freedom. Indeed you are free. Even in your shadow being in the shadow world all you do is an outflow of what you are, as all activity is outflow of what things are. That is shadow freedom, is freedom of shadows. The learned call that necessity.

51

The learned speak of necessity. That is becoming as apprehended by our world-bound intellect. In metaphysical insight we see that as creativity, the universal ground creativity of all becoming.

52

You are only truly free, free as a person, when you have dissipated the shadows of your shadow being, when you have cleared the clutter, when you have healed the fragmentation. You are only truly free in the spontaneity of Love, in the spontaneous creation of beauty, intelligence, and ideal reality. The only true freedom is the freedom of the pure Soul.

53

When, overwhelmed by the vision of Beauty, beauty of form or deed or thought, you exclaim "O God!", then and there you have known God, then and there you have created God.

54

The vision of Beauty, revealing the essence of the divine, is the outflow of the Beauty of the pure Soul.

55

Do I know God? How did I come to know God? Let me tell you. There cane a time when my soul felt lost. She was tormented, feeling that she had lost something. All of a sudden, all that was around her felt unreal, was unreal to her. She suffered a gripping hunger, a tormenting thirst, for Reality. The sun rising, the sun setting. the star-lit heaven, the chirping birds had all been and remained holy to her. But they were no longer what they had been. Until one day she had a dream. Was it a dream? It was only a voice saying: "Your hunger and your thirst — that is the God you are seeking: your yearning and your straining, that is the God you created. You are looking for God everywhere but where you should. Your God comes forth from within you: your God is within you. All else is shadow, shadow that your creative intelligence moulds into shapes and forms and meanings. Thereafter she sought no other God, thereafter she needed no other God.

56

Our world-bound intellect creates our shadow world. Our inner Reality creates meanings and values, outflows in loving deeds, insightful visions, beautiful creations.

57

Reality, the only Reality we know, our inner Reality, is a creative intelligence, is simply intelligent creativity. It is above and beyond all finitude and all temporality. We find that the name that best befits it is Creative Eternity.

IV

The following sayings were recorded in the notes of only five of the Prophet's eight followers.

DW

58

Any attempt to explain or justify the Imperfection and negativity of the shadow world is blameworthy arrogance, a pretense of knowledge where there can be no human knowledge. Many brilliant intellects have been caught in this trap. About the shadow world we know nothing but the superficial, the phenomenal, fleeting formations of shadows. The only reasonable stand for a human being is the confession of ignorance. We have certainty, we have security, on the moral plane where we are creators of our values and ends. Even fools fashion for themselves their own values and aims, their foolish values and aims that enslave them to shadows. The pure Soul creates ideal values and aims and, even in the midst of misery, is free.

59

The pure Soul is emancipated from the shackles of the shadow world. Yet the Soul all alone without the body is

an empty notion, is nothing. The living, active, creative Soul is the Wholeness, the Integrity, of the total human being, the person. The reality of the Soul, the essence of the Soul, is Activity, Creativity: in the shadow world the reality of the Soul is embodied in creations.

60

To speak of the Soul, to speak of Reality, you must speak in paradoxes and contradictions since speech, thought, must break up that whose essence is wholeness, must separate the inseparable.

61

Reality is the wholeness of the All. Reality is Creativity. The shadow world is the existence of the All, is existent activity, existent creativity. Without the shadow world Reality is nothing. But we must hasten to confess that this is only the intelligible vision we form for ourselves of a Reality we envision over and above the one Reality we are immediately and indubitably aware of, our own inner Reality. The motion of Ultimate Reality is a sop to the stubbornness of our logic-enslaved and language-bound intellect. To atone for this sin we must confess our ignorance.

62

The shadow world is the existential actuality of the Reality that is over and beyond Existence but brings forth Existence.

63

Eternity is ineffable, inexpressible, inexplicable. Eternity is in no way related to time. In Eternity the temporality of the existent is redeemed in the essentiality of essential Reality. Eternity, transcending all being and all becoming, is the transcendent fount of all being and all becoming. Eternity is not a creative something but is the metaphysical Principle of Creativity. Shadow-contaminated thought, reason-bound and language-bound thought, cannot comprehend Eternity. Eternity is the pure essence of Creativity, the metaphysical mystery of Creativity.

64

Even the name Creative Eternity is a blasphemy since it makes of Eternity a creative entity, dividing what is indivisible, making a duality of what is one. It is not even true to say that Eternity is creativity: Eternity is the Principle of Creativity, is the Mystery of Creativity. Let this be a warning to you, that to dare speak about Reality is to sin against Reality. To atone for our sin against Reality we must confess that our utterance is a groping for attaining

the unattainable. It has to be received in the spirit of confessed ignorance, else it becomes deadly superstition.

65

The One is the All. The many are the totality of all fleeting existents. Without the One all existents are a total void. Without the ceaselessly vanishing existents the One is absolute Nothingness.

66

All truth is paradox. Paradox denuded of its paradoxicality deepens the darkness of dark shadows. It is pretense of knowledge and that is ignorance compounded.

67

The enlightened speak in myth and parable. The enlightened receive all speech as myth and parable. Else all is superstition.

68

The superstitions of religious faiths, the superstitions of philosophical doctrines, the superstitions of scientific theories, all arose from myths held as truths and all have wrought and will wreak unspeakable harm, atrocities, tragedies on humanity.

69

The remedy to all the ills of the miserable condition of humanity is simple but is as hard as it is simple: it is the humble confession of our complete ignorance, it is the clear-sighted realization that all our faiths, our convictions, our most exact sciences are snares of superstition, are labyrinths of error, when separated from the one Reality, the only Reality, our innermost Reality that is the essence of our yearning for perfection, for being outgoing, outflowing in love and in creativity. That insight is the Light that illumines the darkness of the shadow world. That insight dawned on the human Soul in the earliest beginnings of human existence. Sadly it remained undimmed only in a few, very few, women and men scattered over the face of the earth and along the endless stream of time. Only the diffusion of that insight among all humans will save humanity.

70

The salvation of humanity does not mean the end of pain, of sorrow, of grief, of death, for these are inherent in the nature of finite existence. Negatively, the salvation of humanity means the removal of evil perpetrated by minds enslaved to superstitions and negativities. Positively, the

salvation of humanity means enlightened, peaceful, tranquil acquiescence in the necessities of finite existence: It mrans serenely living in the enjoyment of the true values of love and creativity.

71

Beauty is not a quality found in an object. Beauty is a brilliance cast by a loving soul on the object. The beautiful Soul finds in the object the perfection of integrity. A drama, a tragedy, a comedy, may be beautiful in parts but can only be seen as beautiful as a whole when comprehended as a Whole. A landscape may be rich in beauties but only has aesthetic beauty as a work of art in virtue of the unity, the integrity, found in it.

72

Beware of thinking that Eternity signifies constancy and immutability. Eternity is the principle, the fount, the source, of Life, of all becoming, of all Creativity, and of all creation. It is by being above and beyond all being and all becoming that Eternity is the ground and the source of all being and all becoming.

73

Fear not death. Recoil not from death. Death is the consummation of Life, the fulfilment of life. What is the fruit-tree if its flower die not to give birth to the fruit, if the mellow fruit fall not to the ground to continue the Cycle of Life?

74

Do not overlook the paradox in all thought as in all speech. The paradox in thought and language is the shadow of the mystery in metaphysical Reality. The Form is not eternal. The ideal Form is not immutable. The Form is divine. The divine Form shares the Eternity of the divine. But the Form is not immutable. Neither is Eternity immutable. Eternity is beyond and above mutability. But the Creativity of Eternity is the fount and spring of the mutable.

75

Within you the paradox is exemplified and within you the paradox is transcended. For within you the mystery is reality. Within you all virtue and all virtues are one. Within you is Love. Within you is love of Perfection. Your love of Perfection is a spring of Light. Your Light shines on the world. Your Light reveals here beauty, reveals there mer-

cy, reveals yet again justice and courage and kindness. The one in you brings forth the many. Within you is the paradox, within you the paradox is redeemed. For within you the mystery is reality.

76

I speak in paradoxes. The world is over-burdened with the falsehoods bred by logic and reasoning when they outstep the sphere of shadows and dare meddle with the realm of reality.

V

The following sayings were recorded in the notes of only one of the eight, the only woman among the Prophet's followers. Did the Prophet single her out with these revelations or did none of the others record them because the Prophet had been speaking over their heads? Or was she who alone recorded these dicta writing down reflections of her own, reflections truly inspired by the Prophet but not spoken by him? These questions remain and must remain unanswered. Enough for us that we have these deep probings into our innermost reality as a valuable part of the precious tradition we owe to the Unnamed Prophet.

DW

77

Beware of taking reason into the kingdom of reality.

78

Whatever way reason turns reason baffles reason. At the Altar of the Ultimate all reasoning is blasphemy, all reasoning is anathema. There is no way out of this predicament of reason — no way out but one, to see clearly that reason was born by the shadow world and is fed by shadows and cannot aspire to the realms of Reality.

79

In no way can Being be, in no way can that which exists be true Being. But the thirst of our Soul for Light remains unquenched. The Soul, to find light, must kindle her own real Unreality. The Soul, the non-existent, the Not-Being, is the fount and spring of her own spiritual reality, her spiritual universe. The Soul takes her own creativity as an analogy for the creativity of the ultimate non-existent Not-

Being, as an analogy for the ultimate Creativity that is real and because real cannot exist.

80

The ultimate metaphysical Paradox is the one way out of the ultimate metaphysical Predicament.

81

Trust not to logic when you turn to contemplation of Reality. Logic is the shadow of reason and reason is the empty shell of intelligence, born in and for the shadow world.

82

Contemplation is solitary communion with your innermost Reality. Defile it mot by contact with the tools of the shadow world.

83

Logical and rationalist subtleties lure to deeper and deeper immersion in shadows. To contemplate the real, transcend logic and rationalist thinking.

84

It is not by accretions from the outside world that a person becomes whole but by shedding off such accretions. It is

the pure Soul that is a principle of integrity that lends wholeness to the multiplicities of the world of shadows.

85

"It is by Beauty that all beautiful things are beautiful." Thus spoke the most beautiful of souls. In this oracle there is wisdom surpassing the reach of the words spoken. It is the beautiful Soul that infuses beauty into the beautiful. The essence of a beautiful Soul is Love and Love creates beauty.

86

To speak of a God that exists is blasphemy. God, the fount of Existence, is beyond and above Existence. To speak of God as creator is blasphemy. God is the Principle of Creativity, is eternal Creativity that only in obedience to linguistic propriety do we give It the name of Creative Eternity.

87

They that have no understanding complain that I do not teach you morals. I will not teach you morals. Morals taught, morals received from the outside, are bonds and chains that breed slaves. I lure you to know your innermost Reality, to identify yourselves and your good with

your innermost Reality. When you see that your innermost Reality is your perfection, that your perfection is a fount of love and mercy, outflowing with goodwill and with creations of beauty and of intelligence, that will be all the morals you need.

88

The very substance of the actual transient world is imperfection. In it there can be no guarantee of happiness. A good human life is the fulfilment of the proper perfection of humanity. That will be a serene, beautiful life. Thankfully receive the moments of joy and moments of delight that come your way as gratuitous gifts that come and go.

89

"The Idea of the Good is the highest knowledge." In these words one who is wisdom incarnate summed up the whole of philosophy. In these wise words read further: The Good is Wisdom, the Good and only the Goof is the whole of Wisdom. And in these my words read further: A wholesome Soul, pure and unencumbered with shadows is the fount of all wisdom, all beauty, all reality

“God is Love

And he who abides in Love abides in God

And God abides in him”

1 John 4.15